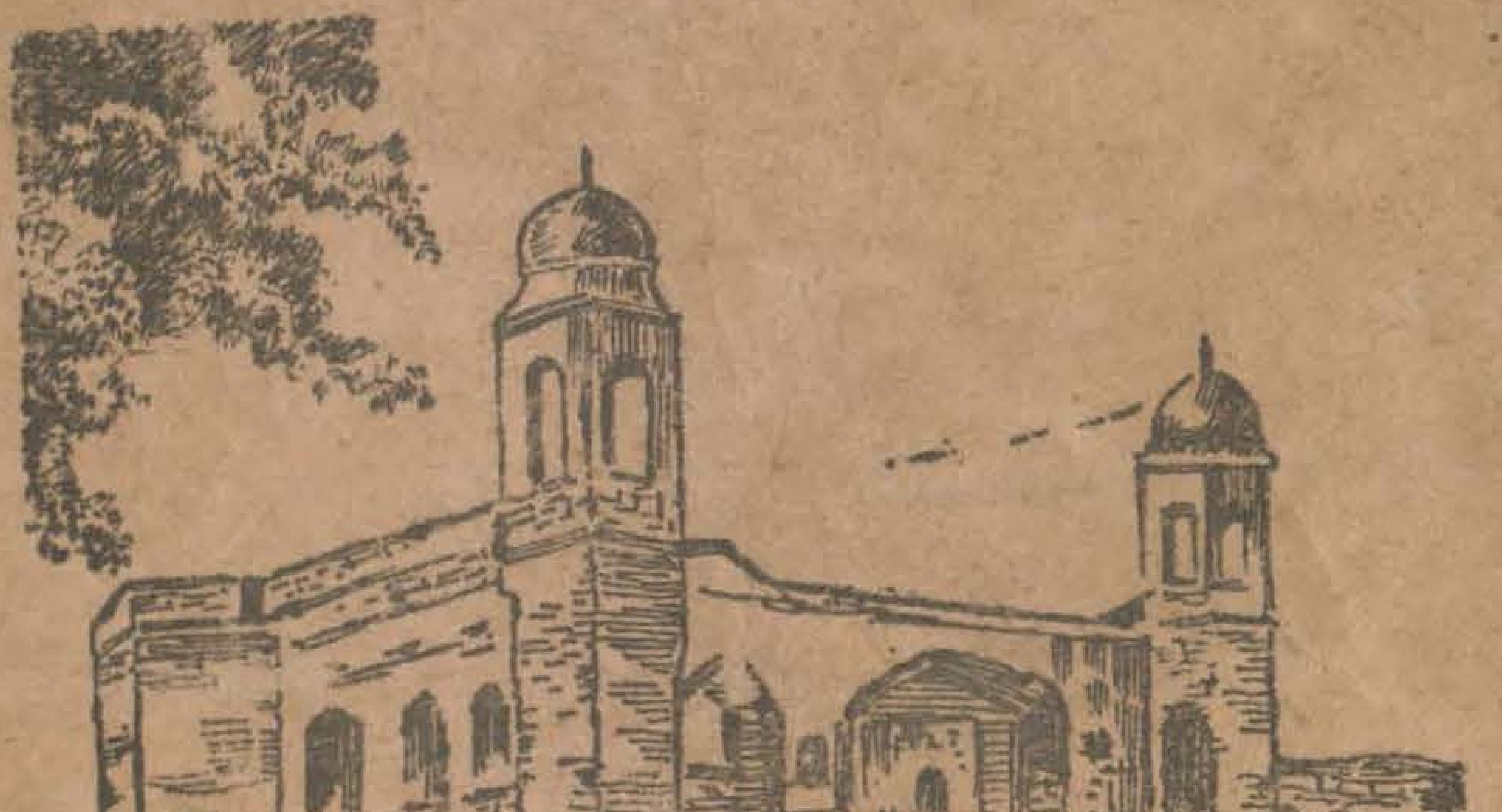
DACCA



Ahmad Hasan Dani

To

Prof. Shujauddin

with Compliments

Ahmad Hasan Dani.

7.8.1962

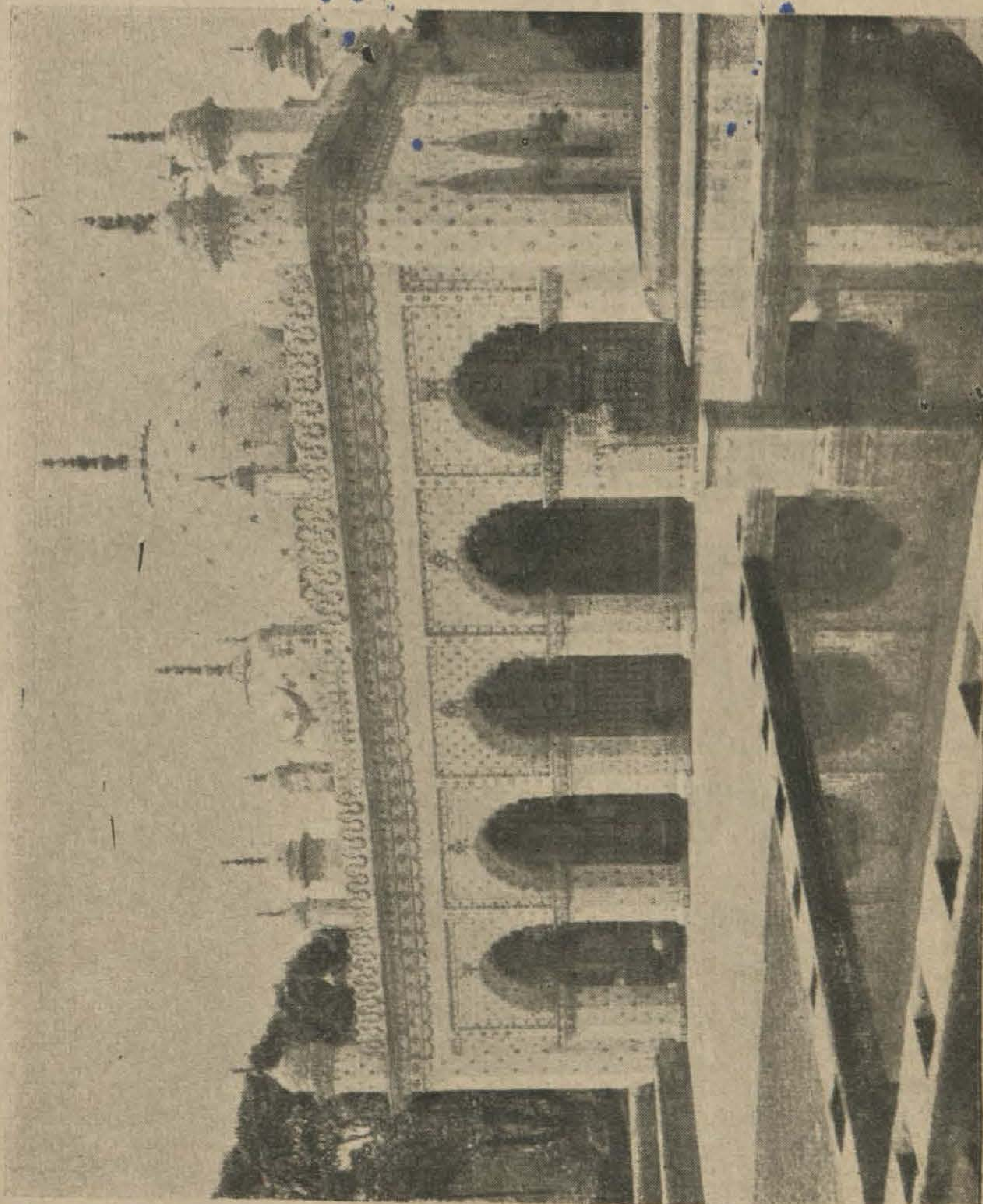
DACCA

A RECORD OF ITS CHANGING FORTUNES

پورب کی جان ھے تو　　اے گلزمین ڈھاکہ

"O Dhaka, the Garden City,
The Queen (of the cities) of the East."

Frontispiece



Sitara Mosque (see p. 193)

DACCA

A RECORD OF ITS CHANGING FORTUNES

By

Ahmad Hasan Dani, M. A., Ph. D. (London)
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&
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DACCA, 1962

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To

My colleagues
In the University of Dacca
with whom I had the pleasure

of

living, talking and discussing
the topics dealt with in this book
since December 1950

as

an humble token of tribute
to their love for me and
their appreciation of my work

FOREWORD

I have read the revised edition of Dr. Dani's book on Dacca with great pleasure. In this expanded form the book has completely changed its form. In the first edition the author had tried to give the details of the cultural history as well as archaeological materials in a readable fashion. In the present edition the entire material has been recast. Greater details have been given to build up a connected story of socio-political and socio-economic aspects of the life of the people in this region as centred in the city of Dacca. The whole makes a running commentary on the changes that took place in the local society in different periods. If one desires to understand the growth of different socio-political phenomena in this region, I am sure the book will prove to be of great help. It is possible to differ from the interpretation given here, but it must be admitted that the author has taken great pains in collecting the materials and putting them in order so as to explain our present malais. At the same time the visitors will have all the details about the interesting places in and around Dacca. In short the book is a handy guide to the visitors as well as a scholarly attempt to unfold the various forces acting and reacting in the socio-political field in this part of the world.

(Dr.) Mahmud Husain
Vice-Chancellor
University of Dacca

May 31, 1962.

Preface to second edition

The first edition of the book was long out of print. Growing demand for it encouraged me to bring out a new edition. The first edition was an antiquarian guide to the city of Dacca and was primarily intended for the visiting delegates to the Pakistan History Conference in 1957. But the interest that the foreign visitors and the people at large have taken in this book have pursuaded me to recast it entirely, add new materials and finally change my approach to the subject. I no longer confine myself to mere antiquarian interest, but I have tried to put the materials in a way so as to throw light on the growing complexity of the local society. The evidence gets fewer as we recede back in time and hence the picture, as we go back, becomes more and more hazy. It increases as we approach the present time, but the proximity to the events makes it difficult to draw a definite conclusion. I have confined myself to tracing the underlying social currents which impel human beings to work for political ends. In this task I have taken the help of my colleagues in the University of Dacca, put them questions on different topics and arrived at some moderate judgement of views for which I am alone responsible. But it is they who have largely helped me in drawing the conclusions, and therefore I cannot but dedicate this book to them with a sincere hope that they would oblige me by accepting this humble offer. The new angle adopted in this edition has not in any way diminished the value of the book for the visitors. They have all the details about the city and its neighbourhood together with this new information arranged in a better fashion. I am also obliged to Dr. Mahmud Husain, Vice-Chancellor, University of Dacca, who has been kind enough

to write the foreword. Since his taking up the Vice-Chancellorship in December 1960, the University has made for the first time, after partition, a definite advance towards planned progress. He has also taken a keen interest in the research work at the University, and has been particularly kind to me and appreciative of my work. I may also add a word about another change. On 10th of May 1962, Lt. General Muhammad Azam Khan handed over charge of the Governorship of East Pakistan, and on 11th Mr. Ghulam Faruque was sworn in as the new Governor.

In this edition I had hoped to print Dacca Guide map of 1962. I pursued the regional Survey of Pakistan for the past one year even before I started revising the book. On every occasion I was told that in fifteen days' time the map would be ready. But my patience exhausted at the end when I had completed the printing of the book. I could wait no longer. The readers would have to be satisfied only with Dacca sketch map 1961.

At the end I would like to thank Bureau of National Reconstruction, Government of East Pakistan, who have generously contributed towards the cost of bringing out this edition. I am also thankful to my children Fauziya, Anis, Nawed and Junaid who competed in the race for preparing the index.

تلك آثارنا تدل علينا   فانظروا بعدنا إلى لاثار

Dacca Museum
1 June 1962.

Ahmad Hasan Dani

Extracts from Preface to first edition

Several friends asked me to write a book on Dacca in order to serve the needs of those who would like to know something about the origin and development of this city and also to provide a guide-book to the foreign visitors who daily pour into this city in large numbers. In view of the existence of a good number of books on Dacca in English, Bengali and Urdu, and especially after the publication of Mr. Taifoor's *Glimpses of Old Dhaka*, I hesitated for a long while to undertake this work. In 1953, February—March, The Third Pakistan History Conference was to be held in Dacca, and in order to provide the visiting delegates with a handy guide to the historic past of Dacca, I was requested by Dr. A. Halim, Professor and Head of the department of History, Dacca University, to write a book on this subject. This time I agreed, and the book was completed in 1952, but owing to some unavoidable circumstances it could not be sent to the press then. Once again the Pakistan History Conference is going to take place at Dacca in February, 1957, and I have availed of this opportunity to publish the book. No alteration has been made in the manuscript since it was first written in 1952, except in the most glaring cases where the new development of the city needed correction. ... ...

I am a new-comer in Dacca. I had to learn everything about the city either from the books or from my friends who most ungrudgingly offered me their co-operation and help. To all of them I am deeply indebted, and especially I would like to mention thankfully the name of Mr. S. M. Taifoor, from whom I have learnt so much about Dacca. ... ...

Map No. 1 (now no.2) is adapted from Dr.N.K. Bhattasali's map appearing with his article in *Bengal Past and Present* ; No. 2 (now no. 3) is taken from S. C. Hill's *Three Frenchmen in Bengal* ; and No. 3 (now no. 5) is based on Street Map of Dacca, 1952, prepared by Survey of Pakistan, to whom I am greatly indebted for permission to copy. The old photographs, published here, are taken from the drawings of Charles D'Oyly's *Antiquities of Dacca*, and for others I am thankful to the department of archaeology, Government of Pakistan.

Dacca Museum
Ramna, Dacca.
18th October, 1956.

Ahmad Hasan Dani

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CHAPTER I

TOPOGRAPHY OF DACCA

The Province of East Pakistan : Dacca, or more correctly Dhaka, is the capital of the province of East Pakistan and a recognised subsidiary capital of the whole of Pakistan. This province, which is formed of the lower reaches of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, is a land of rivers and plains. From the banks of the Padma (the eastern branch of the Ganges) on the west to the Chittagong and Jaintia hills on the east, from the foot-hills of the Himalayas and its off-shoot, the Garo, on the north to the shores of the Bay of Bengal on the south, "it is one great wide-sweeping plain, low-lying and fertile, drained by some of the mightiest rivers of the East as they forge their impetuous way through many an ever-changing channels to the sea. Watered abundantly by nature in generous mood, the trim rice-fields stretch mile on mile, locked close in the embrace of countless streams and rivulets, luxuriant in every exquisite shade of green, like emeralds set in a silver sheen."

Location of Dacca : Dacca is situated in the very heart of this land of rivers and plains, about a hundred miles above the mouths of the Ganges, and is connected with the river-routes suitable for effectively controlling the province (see map no.1). This central region, where meet the great rivers— the Meghna, the Brahmaputra, the Lakhya and the Dhaleswari (ancient channel of the Ganges), has seen the rise and fall of various capitals—Sabhar, Vikrampur, Sonargaon, Jahangirnagar and now Dacca have followed one after the other. Of all these, the city of Dacca, which lies in $23^{0}43'$ N.

Latitude and $90^{0}24'$ E. Longitude, is well protected from natural calamities as it stands upon the northern bank of the Buriganga, the river *Dulai*[1] of the Muslim historians, about eight miles above its confluence with the Dhaleswari. This river, which is here deep and navigable by large boats, expands in the season of inundation to a considerable breadth and gives to Dacca with its minarets and spacious buildings the appearance, like that of Venice in the west, of a city rising from the surface of the water.

Boundaries of Dacca : Dacca is a growing city. The speed of its growth defies proper definition of its limits. While the city proper still extends lengthwise along the northern bank of the river Buriganga, new development areas—both residential and industrial—stretch far beyond the imagination of the ordinary man. In the past there was heavy demand on the land near the river because of the facilities of river communication. This fact accounts for the alignment of the city from east to west and gives, with its monumental buildings, a panoramic view of the city from the river. As we proceed from the heart of the city towards the west, the ground-level gradually rises. This higher area formerly comprised the Mughal extension of Dacca (see map no. 2). Till 1950 the houses and roads continued up to Hazaribagh, Maneswar and Peelkhana on the west, beyond which survived the scattered ruins of old—Rayer Bazar, Sarai Ja'farabad and Sarai Begampur. Then the length of the city was about five miles. Today the jungle is cleared. Beyond the Peelkhana and the New Market the Dhanmandi Residential Area has grown into a fashionable zone of the elite. The houses are served by Mirpur road and Satmasjid road, with many inter-links in between, both the roads meeting at Muhammadpur Colony—a new respectable area built at the lowest cost and

1. It is probably a corruption of the first part of Dhal-Ishwari.

with maximum speed and energy by Lt. General Muhammad AzamK han, at present the Governor of East Pakistan. Thereafter the houses follow the Mirpur road until we come to Sabhar farm. Today there are large gaps between this farm on the north-west and the industrial zone of Narayanganj on the south east, a distance of about twentyfive miles, but the constructions are going ahead to link up the two proper ends of the city. The raised causeway that formerly joined Narayanganj and Dacca has now been broadened and its either side is lined with numerous factories and houses. From this causeway a new road branches off to the north skirting the eastern limit of the residential houses and meets the Demra road at a point which takes us direct to the new town of Ramna. The Demra road is a short-cut beween Dacca and the new jute and cotton mills along the Lakhya, including Adamjeenagar, and further beyond going up to Narayanganj. Far below the roads stretch miles and miles of low land submerged under water with smiling rice-fields around. In places we occasionally see little raised-up islands, where crop up village huts or the rendezvous of humble folks, the villages communicating with one another during the rains by simple boats. There we see a throng of boats at a weekly market and here at a muddy channel we hear splash of kids for a lucky catch of a prized fish. This rural activity follows the entire low land that rounds up the eastern and north eastern limits of the city—a dividing line between the ultra-modern houses of the gentry and the bamboo and thatched shelters of the humble villagers. The new railway link, which will ultimately replace the railway line of the city, marks off the present northern boundary with a few exceptions. Starting from the east we find the suburb of Kamalapur, which has swelled beyond proportion on the other side of the proposed Dacca railway station and almost merged with the village of Manda. Close at hand spreads out the Shahar Khilgaon, where a few new houses have already cropped up. At present the

Outer Circular Road is the last metalled street that extends from the Magh Bazar crossing to the East Pakistan Road Transport head-quarter. Beyond Khilgaon the low land intrudes into the city and passes as Iskatan Khal (channel) under the most important Mymensingh road, originally built by the Mughal Governor Mir Jumla (A. D. 1660-63). In the past there was a bridge at this point (see chapter VIII) but to-day, we remember it only by the surviving Bazar at Karwan. Beyond the Karwan Bazar has now grown up the industrial area of Tejgaon, which has its own railway station, not far from the present airport. Still further is now being developed the garden city of Gulshan. Away from the congestion of the old town, perched like an island within a mass of low land water, Gulshan is surely going to be a luxurious spot for the aristocrat. It is directly linked to the airport, the Tejgaon railway station and the industrial zone. Beyond the airport now lies the Dacca Cantonment and still ahead another industrial zone of Tongi, including Mannoonagar, is fast growing up. The total lengh of the city from the river Buriganga to this spot is about 15 miles. A loop road is now being constructed, taking off from the old Mymensingh road, to by-pass the Dacca Cantonment and reach Tongi direct. Very soon the airport is going to be shifted northward beyond the Cantonment to provide a long run-way for jet service, and the vacated airport area along with the old Manipur Farm will receive in due course the buildings of the Central Government stretching up to Muhammadpur Colony.

Inland Water Channel : In this deltaic land of monsoonic rainfall there is no scarcity of water. Everywhere in shallow depressions sheets of water accumulate, and if they are not properly channelised, they may breed mosquitoes and other infectious germs. This problem has been tackled for long in Dacca. Through the heart of the old town flows a number of channels, the most important of which is the Dulai Khal

that takes off from the Buriganga near Babu Bazar, goes north of Zindabahar and Goalnagar, crosses Nawabpur road and Narinda road, and turning round Jaluanagar and Hal Sharafatganj flows under the Iron Bridge back into the Buriganga. The Dulai Khal, according to Dr. N. K. Bhattasali, was a canal excavated by Islam Khan, the first Mughal Governor of Dacca. It was meant to protect the pre-Mughal city as well as to provide an internal water communication. In course of time the channel became choked at places by the filth and dirt thrown from the neighbouring houses. Now this is being developed as an underground drainage in the old city. A number of Mughal time bridges of camber type span over these city channels, among which the most important are Tanti Bazar bridge, Masandi bridge, Narinda bridge, Amir Khan's bridge, Srichak bridge, Babu Bazar bridge, Rai Saheb's Bazar bridge, Nazir Bazar bridge, Chand Khan's bridge at the Nazimuddin road. Another most important channel, probably linked by Islam Khan, as it skirts *Bagh-i-Badshahi* (see below) on the other side, flows behind Shah Bagh and Radio Station and makes a beautiful bend through the Ramna Green Park, then passes on to Segun Bagicha and Purana Paltan, and finally comes out at the Moti Jheel, later merging into the eastern low land. The third winding channel can be seen at the Dhanmandi Residential Area, where it is being developed as the anglers' corner. The fourth channel that surrounds the garden city of Gulshan has already been described. These channels, when controlled and properly utilised, give an added charm and elegance to the city, for it is mainly the abundance of water that characterises East Pakistan.

Buriganga : At present Buriganga alone provides the best river trip in Dacca. It makes a dividing line between the urbane monuments on its northern bank and the rural huts and fields on the southern bank. The two separately tell the stories of the modern civilised man and of the traditional

life that truly belongs to Bengal. It is a wonderful spectacle to see the villagers up in their boats laden with bananas, coconuts and oranges crowding the urban shore to exchange the products of their toil with luxuries and fashion articles of the city. The uncouth and the civilised meet together and join in the common pursuit of life. It is probably for their facility that during the Mughal time a bund was constructed by Nawab Shaista Khan from the present site of the Mitford Hospital, where his palace was situated, to Lalbagh. It was called *Poshta* (embankment). Now this bund has totally gone but the name survives in that of a *Mahalla* to the south of Lalbagh near Waterworks. The neighbouring localities, Rahmatganj, Kanserhata (correctly speaking *Qası-Hat*, *Qasr* meaning palace), Urdu[1] Bazar, Nurafat right upto Bakhshi Bazar on the eastern side of Lalbagh, and on its western side Atishkhana, Shaikhsaheb's Bazar, Chaudhuri Bazar, Qasimnagar, Bagh Hosainuddin, Nawabganj, Enayatganj including Qazirbagh and Hazaribagh are very important from historical point of view as they remind us of the Mughal colony of officers round about these localities. Chandnighat was the important landing station at that time. There are many other *ghats* on the river side, the most important of which are Debidasghat, Sawari-ghat, Badamtali-ghat, Wise-ghat, Sadar-ghat and Jagannath-ghat. At these *ghats* a big market in fruits, vegetables and other sundry articles, is everyday held, where country boats bring these commodities from the villages and sell them very cheaply. The steamers go right upto Badamtali-ghat. For the convenience of loading and unloading a modern bund, called Buckland bund, has been constructed, which goes from Jagannath-ghat in front of Northbrooke Hall and Ahsan Manzil to Badamtali-ghat. It is proposed to develop in the near future a long line of water front along the Buriganga with a well-laid parallel road. In recent time the river

1. Meaning 'camp', named after the Mughal soldiery living here.

Buriganga has changed its course higher up near Satmasjid and it has receded about a mile towards the west. The Satmasjid now stands upon a swamp which gets dried up in summer.

City Planning and Roads : The planning of the city and its road-system can be best understood in viewing the city as it developed historically. The main city can be broadly divided into four historical periods of development. The oldest city consisted of a few market centres like Lakshmi Bazar, Bangla Bazar, Sankhari Bazar and Tanti Bazar, along with a few localities of craftsmen and business men like Patua-toli, Kumar-toli and Sutrapur, Jalua-nagar, Bania-nagar and Goal-nagar. All these localities are confined within the circuit of the old Dulai Khal. The focus of this old city is Sadar-ghat and Victoria Park (the ancient Anta-ghar which is now being changed into a Shahid Memorial commemorating the martyrs of 1857). It was near Bangla Bazar that the old European settlements were situated in the 18th and 19th centuries. The second city consisted of the Mughal Dacca (see map no. 2) extending westward upto Sarai Begampur and northward to Bagh-i-Badshahi[1], where on one side now stands Dacca High Court and on the other is laid the Ramna Green Park. Another important addition by the Mughals was in the region of Postagola, (correctly *Pusht-i-Qila*) where formerly stood two forts of Beg Murad Khan. The Hindus also began to build thatched shelters in the locality later known as Narinda (correctly Narayandia), but this area became a part of the city long after 1860. It is at this time that the great business centre near the Bara Katra was developed. Since then the Chauk Bazar has remained the main emporium in the city. Behind the Chauk stands the Maulvi Bazar having retail shops for vegetables and grains. This Chauk Bazar is connected with the Sadar-ghat by a road running parallel

1. Modern Shah Bagh preserves the old name.

to the river, and on either side of this road are seen today wholesale shops. This road is a continuation of the old Patua-toli, and the extension bears the name of Islampur and Mughal-toli. It continues right across the Mughal city to the extreme western end. In the beginning of the 18th century the decay and decline set in the city, and the map of 1859 (see map no. 4) shows wide patches of desolate areas. The third important stage in the development of the city came during the first partition of Bengal when Dacca was made the head-quarter of the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. At this time the foundation of a new town[1] was laid for accommodating the new offices and residential houses for the officers. This new extension was practically the modern Ramna area beyond the present railway line. The municipal limit then extended upto Segun Bagicha, Magh Bazar, Shah Bagh and Dhanmandi on the north. However, there was hardly any construction in Dhanmandi at this time. The houses and offices were built round about the Ramna Race Course. But sometime earlier the Top Khana, the Purana Paltan and Naya Paltan, associated with the British soldiery, had been given over for public residence. Similarly the localities of Wari and Ganderia on the eastern side had come into existence in the last century. The new areas were mainly residential or official, and they hardly affected the business quarters, except the development of a few vegetable and grain markets, like Naya Bazar, Hosain (formerly Alu) Bazar and Thatheri Bazar. But one important cross-road started from Sadar-ghat and went upto Purana Paltan, the major part known as Nawabpur Road. New retail shops for fashion articles gradually developed on either side of this road. At the city end of this road stood the district court and at the other the rest house and the Government

1. Munshi Rahman Ali Taish, *Tawarikh-i-Dacca*, 1910, pp. 313-14. See also Dacca Municipality map drawn from the Survey of 1912-15.

house. Many other cross roads joined the old city with the new town (see map no. 5). The fourth and final city is now under construction. The important areas that have been developed include the Motijheel commercial area, fashionable shops at the Jinnah Avenue and Stadium market, Santi-nagar, Rajar Bagh and Iskatan residential areas, Azimpur estate and Dhanmandi houses, including the New Market, Muhammadpur Colony and the industrial zones at Tejgaon and beyond[1]. This modern Dacca, with broad roads and open lawns and parks, has completely changed the face of the city. For the first time we have roads with paved footpaths and dual carriages in Dacca. The wide road from the airport to the Government house is almost complete. All these changes are seen in Ramna and the newly developed areas (see map no. 6). In the old city a beginning has been made near Victoria Park[2] but medievalism is still writ large in the older areas.

Population of Dacca : The population within the old Dacca municipality, as ascertained in 1951 census, was 273, 459. But this number excluded the important localities of Tejgaon and other newly developed areas which formed a part of Greater Dacca. The population of Tejgaon police station was then 159, 394. Now a new demarcation line has been fixed for Dacca, and it is proposed to levy for the first time a toll tax on the goods imported

1. Two new shopping centres—one near Shah Bagh Hotel and the other Baitul Mukarram opposite foreign post office have just been completed. Another residential plan for the middle class people beyond Malibagh has also been announced.
2. The broadening of the Nawabpur Road has been temporarily given up, and in its place a new cross road from Ramna to Buriganga along Qazi Alauddin Road and Naya Bazar is under construction.

into this area from outside. This wider zone includes ten unions—the settled areas upto Muhammadpur Colony in the west, to Tejgaon airport, Khilgaon and Kamalapur in the north, and Dayaganj and Postagola in the east. The population of Greater Dacca, as determined in the census of 1961, is 897,608.

Summary : The special features of Dacca may be summed up now. The elevated spot of the city enlivened with the traditional greenery of Bengal contrasts markedly with the low-lying plain stretching for miles and miles around. Its old companion the river Buriganga not only bears the city on its northern bank but also affords facilities for trade and commerce and reflects in its water the historic past : the domes and minarets, the *Katras* and mosques, towers and fortifications—all casting their deep shadows on the tranquil current of the river. The old town, with its medieval appearance, winding streets and age-old markets, still guards the secret of its origin, but a later day channelling through its quarters is evident from the existence of numerous *Khals* and streamlets. Long thoroughfares give a complete cross section of the old town. But the most revolutionary change that is now going on is the building of New Dacca which not only tastes of modernity but also forecasts a complete change in the life of the city. Dacca is in the grip of rebirth from the old into a new world.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF OLD DACCA

(to A. D. 1608)

Introduction : The history of Dacca goes back to the early centuries of the Christian era, but its origin is still wrapped in fanciful traditions and the details of its rise are a matter of controversy. There is, however, sufficient evidence to show that the city flourished during the ascendancy of the Hindus and also under the Independent Sultans of Bengal. We get the first glimmer of the commercial prosperity of Dacca during this period. But Dacca, for the first time, came into lime light under the Mughals, who established here their provincial seat in A. D. 1608. It was the centre of political, cultural, and social life, promoted by the Mughals, and for the next hundred years, it dictated the trends of events throughout Bengal. Many foreign travellers visited this town and lavished praise on its prosperity, growth and luxury. Dacca expanded and flourished.

Then came the ebb. In A. D. 1706 the princely viceroy Azim-ush-Shan bade farewell to Dacca. With him departed the Mughal glory. The seat of government was soon transferred to Murshidabad, and the future rulers of Dacca, the *Naib Nazims* or their representatives, maintained a show of Mughal splendour only by corrupt exactions. A change came with the British Rule in 1765, but the ghost of the old *Naib Nizamat* survived till 1843. This was the period of transition, when the old Mughal life was slowly transformed and superseded by European tastes and fashions. The machine-made goods of

Europe were flooding the markets of Dacca. The local trade and commerce declined, the population thinned and the city shrank.

With the broadening of its roads, clearing the filth and dirt of the city, and introduction of English education, Dacca began its modern life from about 1835. The city developed as a mofussil town in the Presidency of Bengal. Sudden change came in 1905, after the first partition of Bengal, when Dacca was again made the capital of the newly created province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. A new life flowed into the city, and the grand buildings of the Ramna area slowly came into prominence. But this was a mere storm in the new line of progress of Dacca. The partition was annulled, and Dacca reduced to its normal position on 1st April, 1912. However, the city gained in one respect. In 1912, Lord Hardinge, the then viceroy, announced the scheme for a University of Dacca, which was formally established in 1921. The city gradually developed on this educational line. In August, 1947 Dacca once again was chosen for the capital of East Pakistan, and it has now embarked on a new and independent life as the premier city in the eastern wing of Pakistan.

The details of the first stage are given in this chapter.

Derivation of the Name : The origin of the city of Dacca is shrouded in mystery. Various suggestions are given to explain the derivation of the name Dacca. According to the most popular opinion, "the word Dhaka or Dacca is............derived from Dhak, the name of a tree *Butea Frondosa*, which is plentiful here."[1] Dr. Taylor has

1. James Taylor : *Topography of Dacca*, Calcutta, 1840, p. 21.

noted another tradition : "Bollalsen is supposed by all classes of the Hindoos here to have been the son of Berham-pooter (Bhahma-putra), in the guise of a Brahman, by one of Adisur's wives, and to have been born and brought up in the jungle to the north of the Boorigonga, whither his mother had been banished by Adisur. Tradition further asserts, that in gratitude for the protection he received from Durga in this situation, he or Adisur, by whom he was subsequently adopted, built a temple to this goddess, whose idol Bollalsen had discovered in the jungle. This place, from its concealed situation (*Dhaka* in Bengali means 'concealed'), was called Dehaka Iserry (Dhakesvari), but the jungle being afterwards cleared away, a town sprang up, which received the name of "Dehaka" or Dacca."[1] This tradition is hardly believable because in general the name of a patron deity derives from that of the city, and not vice-versa. The third opinion is given in the words of Sayid Aulad Hasan : "Tradition, however, refers the etymology of Dhaka to *Dhak*, the Bengali for a big drum. It is said that when the constant aggressions of the Afghans and the Mugs from the east necessitated removal of the seat of Government from Rajmahal to some place near the eastern frontier of the *Nizamat*, Shaikh Alauddin Islam Khan, the Mughal Governor of the province, came out in 1608 in a state-barge accompanied by a fleet of boats, in search of a site for his future capital. When the boat came opposite the place where the city now stands, the governor found it to be a spot of great strategical importance, and accordingly chose it for his future capital. The boats were brought near the bank of the river and moored, and Islam Khan landed and inspected the site. The place where he landed is still called after him Islampur, and is an

1. *Ibid*, p. 66.

important quarter of the city. On his way back he met a party of Hindus performing their *puja* with the accompaniment of music and *Dhaks* (drums). An idea struck him. Calling the drummers together, he made them stand at a central place, and ordered them to beat the drums as hard as they could. At the same time he commanded three of his attendants to go, one to the east, another to the west, and third to the north, each with a flag-staff, and plant it at the place where the sound of the drums would cease to be audible. This being done he called the place, Dhaka from *Dhak*, a drum, and ordered boundary pillars to be erected at the places where the flag-staffs had been planted. These he fixed as the boundaries of the city to the north, the west and east, the river Buriganga forming the southern boundary. Here he fixed his capital."[1]

These popular stories hardly deserve credence. Dr. N. K. Bhattasali rightly observes. "I have no hesitation in rejecting the well-known and fantastic story of the drum (*Dhak*) as well as the story of the name of the town after the hidden goddess (Dhaka-Iswari) of Ballala Sen discovered by Man-Simha during his stay in these regions. Any one who has any acquaintance with images and who has carefully observed the image of Dhakeswari will unhesitatingly declare that it can by no means be of the time of Ballala Sena."[2] Besides, it is well-known that Islam Khan gave the name of Jahangirnagar to this town. That Dacca was the older name and that this city was existing long before the time of Islam Khan and Mansingh will be clear from the history given below.

1. Aulad Hasan, *Notes on the Antiquities of Dacca*, (hereafter referred to as *Notes*) pp. 1-2.
2. *Bengal : Past and Present*, Vol. XXXIII, 1927, p. 27.

Lately, Dr. D. C. Sircar[1] has suggested that Dacca is probably equivalent to "Dhakka", which means "watch-station" in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*[2]. Accordingly he tries to explain that this town, which is situated on a high ground, might have served as a watch-station to the neighbouring Hindu capitals at Vikrampur and Sonargaon, and hence in course of time the name Dhakka or Dhaka became permanently fixed for this place. For this suggestion he tries to get support from the name of a Prakrit dialect, called *Dhakka bhasha*, and explains that it was a language spoken round about Dacca. This reference to *Dhakkiya Prakrit* was made long ago by Yatindra Mohan Roy[3].

It must, however, be admitted that no satisfactory explanation of the origin of the name is so far available. The name is, no doubt, a survival of some prehistoric period, and in it is concealed some hither-to unknown history of the people who developed this commercial centre on the bank of the Buriganga.

Ancient History : The name Dacca is not traceable in the historical records of the ancient period. Even the name Buriganga is not seen in earlier accounts. So far I have been able to trace Buddhi Gangini in the Mainamati copper plate inscription of Ladahachandra of 10th century A. D., but this was a stream in Samatata-mandala (modern Comilla district). At present the river Buriganga branches off from the main river Dhaleswari (or correctly Dhwalesvari—the white goddess) and falls back into the

1. *Bharatiya Vidya*, Vol. XI, nos 3 & 4. pp. 183-86.
2. Aurel Stein, *Rajatarangini*, Vol. I, Book III., Verse 227. For explanation see Vol. II, p. 291 and p. 391 ; other verses are V, 39 and V, 306.
3. *Dhakar Itihasa*, Vol. II, pp. 37-38.

same river. The Dhaleswari itself takes off from the Jamuna (Brahmaputra) much before it joins with the Padma at Goalando, but in the eighteenth century (as shown in the Rennell's map) the Dhaleswari took off from the Padma and joined with the Meghna not far from Narayanganj. These three rivers, Padma, Dhaleswari and Buriganga today are three distinct rivers, but it appears that gradually they branched out into different channels from the main Padma (or Ganges), and hence the new term Buriganga (meaning *the old Ganges*).

In this land of rivers and plains the junction of rivers makes the best spot for the establishment of administrative head-quarter. One such place was Vikrampur (see chapter X for detail), now a ruined flat in the water-logged area of the Munshiganj sub-division, just west of the river Dhaleswari. This city lay at the head of the ancient land of Bang, which probably extended from the Bay of Bengal up to Dacca in the north and to the river Meghna in the west. But so far the story of Vikrampur is connected only with the history of Chandra, Pala, Varman and Sena rules of Bengal, who are known to have ruled from this place between 9th to 13th centuries A. D. Prior to this period we know nothing of this region, except a few Buddhist ruins found near Sabhar. During the rule of the imperial Guptas we hear of Samatata in Comilla district. In the late 13th century A. D. Vikrampur was replaced by Suvarnagrama (Sonargaon), now a ruined group of villages between the rivers Meghna and Brahmaputra, about four miles east of Narayanganj. Sonargaon became an important seat of Government during the rule of the Hindu Deva dynasty. It was in the vicinity of this town that the Delhi emperor, Ghiyasuddin Balban, met Rai Danuj (Ariraja Danujamadhava Dasharathadeva) in A. D. 1282.

Pre-Muslim Antiquities : The earliest definite evidence of the antiquity of Dacca is afforded by the Gupta gold imitation coins, datable to about 7th century A. D., which were discovered in *Nawab Rashid Khan Ka Bagicha*, now a large stretch of arable land, little way west of the local *Pil-Khana*.[1] These coins prove only the ancient character of the site, but give no details about the city of Dacca. H. E. Stapleton agrees with J. F. Fleet and argues to place Davaka,[2] occurring in the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudra Gupta (circa 4th century A. D.), round about Dacca,[3] but Dr. N. K. Bhattasali takes it for modern Dabhok in Naogong district, Assam.[4] An image of Hari-Shankara (half Hari and half Shankara) has also been found in an old tank at Tejgaon, adjoining the town on the north. "It is a fine image in black chlorite, about 30'' high, and can be ascribed to the Sena period (11th-12th century A. D.). The exact find-spot is about 2 furlongs from the brick over-bridge over the Railway line, north of the Tejgaon Railway station."[5] These fragmentary informations may suggest that the site of Dacca was occupied in the Pre-Muslim period.

Early Muslim Rule in Dacca Region : In A. D. 1204 Muhammad Bakht-yar Khalji established Muslim rule in north Bengal. The Hindu Sena rulers fled to the east and maintained their precarious existence at Vikrampur till at least A. D. 1242.[6] The Senas waged a constant struggle

1. *J. A. S. B.* Vol. VI, 1910, pp. 141-43.
2. J. F. Fleet *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. III, p. 8.
3. *J. A. S. B.*, Vol. VI, 1910. p. 144.
4. *Bharatavarsha*, B. S, 1338, p. 90.
5. *Bengal : Past and Present*, Vol. LI, 1936, p. 49.
6. Minhaj in *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* speaks about the existence of the Sena rule during his visit to Lakhnauti.

against the Muslims, whom they referred to in their inscriptions as *Garga*—(correctly *Garjana*-)*Yavanas*.[1] In the meanwhile the rise of a new Hindu Deva dynasty at Sonargaon spelled doom for the Senas, who, being pressed by the Devas on the one hand and the Muslims on the other, had to give way ultimately to the eastward advance of the Muslims. In the seventies of the 13th century the Governor of Lakhnauti (modern Gaur in Malda district of West Bengal), Mughisuddin Tughril, appears to have advanced into Dacca region, and, according to Dr. Qanungo,[2] established the "impregnable fortress of Narkila (the same as "the fort of Tughral" of Barani, identified with the important Feringi stronghold of Loricol, about 25 miles due south of Dacca)". About the eightees of the thirteenth century A. D. Sonargaon appears to have been conquered by the descendants of the Delhi emperor, Ghiyasuddin Balban who had left behind his son Bughra Khan in Bengal. Since then Sonargaon continued to occupy the position of a subsidiary capital of the Muslim Sultanate in Bengal, though the main royal seat of Government remained at Lakhnauti.

The Muslim history of Sonargaon began with the arrival of the great Maulana Shaikh Sharfuddin Abu Tawwama,[3] the teacher and father-in-law of the celebrated saint of Bihar, Shaikh Sharfuddin Yahya Muneri. He maintained a *madrassah* for his students and a *khanqah* for his disciples. The first Muslim coin from the *Kharaj* (land-tax) of Bang was issued by Sultan Ruknuddin Kaikaus, the grandson of Balban, in 1291, and the first Muslim coin from the mint town of Sonargaon was issued by Sultan Shamsuddin Firoz of Bengal in 1305.

1. A. H. Dani, *Bibliography of the Muslim inscriptions of Bengal*, p. 128.
2. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, published by University of Dacca. p. 59.
3. For details see Dr. A. Karim, *Social History of the Muslims in Bengal*. Dacca, 1959, pp. 67-76.

In 1338 Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah asserted his independence during the chaos that overtook the rule of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, the Delhi emperor. Fakhruddin maintained a powerful state for ten years and helped in the development of trade and commerce between East Pakistan and South East Asia. In 1349 he was succeeded by his son, Ikhtiyaruddin Ghazi Shah, who lost his throne to a rival ruler of Bengal, Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah, in 1353. Ilyas, a new-comer from northern India, won the support of the local people and founded the independent Sultanate of Bangala. His grandson, Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah (A. D. 1389-1409), kept up a lively court at Sonargaon and often indulged in literary beauties as well as in human frailties of common romance. One poetic line composed by him rhyming the names of his three concubines is quoted below.

> "Oh cup-bearer, there is talk of the *Cypress*, the *Rose* and the *Tulip*",

The other part of this couplet is said to have been completed by the famous Persian poet Hafiz in the following line :

> "This discussion goes on with three cleansing draughts."[1]

The king invited the poet to come to Bengal but he could not comply with the request. However, he sent the following *ghazl :*

> "All the parrots of India will crack sugar-candy
> Through this Persian candy which is going to Bengal.

1. ساقی حدیث سرو و گل و لاله میرود
این بحث با ثلاثهٔ غساله میرود

O Hafiz, be not speechless with yearning for the
court of Sultan Ghiyasuddin,
For thy affair will be furthered by thy lamentation."[1]

For about two hundred years Sonargaon maintained the dominant position in East Bengal. Towards the later half of the 16th century A. D. it was at the height of its power under a local *zamindar* Isa Khan, who built numerous strongholds in its vicinity to checkmate the attempts of the Mughal emperor Akbar from annexing this region. But this resistance was short-lived. In 1608 the *zamindar's* son Musa Khan was finally defeated by the Mughal governor Islam Khan and pensioned off. Sonargaon was crushed and left desolate and the new capital was built at Dacca.

Dacca under the Sultans : There are various ruins in the Dacca region of the Sultanate period. They will be described in the relevant chapters. Here we produce the materials from the Dacca city. Two stone inscriptions have so far been discovered in the city throwing light on its history under the Sultans of Bengal. Both of them fall in the reign of Nasiruddin Mahmud (A. D. 1435-59).

Binat Bibi Mosque inscription : The first is found on a small slab of stone above the door of Binat Bibi's mosque at Narinda[2]. It reads : "Bismillah. The Kalimah. With the call 'Come to weal' by morning and night, the mosque of this humble person, Musammat Bakht Binat, daughter

1. شکر شکن شوند همه طوطیان هند
زین قند پارسی که به بنگاله میرود
حافظ ز شوق مجلس سلطان غیاث الدین
خامش مشو که کار تو از ناله میرود

2. For description of the mosque see chapter VIII.

of Marhamat. The year 861 (A. D. 1457)."[1] H. E. Stapleton rightly points out that "the inscription is somewhat curious as being in Persian, and for its omission of any reference to the reigning king."[2] It is not known who Bakht Binat was. The name, however, suggests that she did not belong to the upper class of the society.

Naswallagali Mosque Inscription : The second inscription, two years later in date, is now deposited in the Dacca Museum. It originally came from an old mosque in Naswallagali, a street in the quarter of the town of Dacca known as *Gird-i-Qila* (western side of modern jail). Aulad Hasan records about the mosque : "This is a very old solid building, situated to the west of the Lunatic Asylum (no longer in existence). The roof which was surmounted with a single dome, was struck by lightning some years ago. The earthquake of 1897 had also injured it. It came down about a year ago. The walls are, however, standing, and are about 4 feet thick. The building measures 27 X 16½ feet, inside measurement."[3] In its place modern mosque now stands. The inscription reads : "Allah the Great has said, "Verily mosques belong to Allah ; so do not call Allah with anyone". This gate was strengthened and built in the days of the authority of the Khalifa, the succoured, Nasirud-Dunya wad-Din Abul Muzaffar Mahmud Shah, the Sultan, may Allah, the Glorious, perpetuate his kingdom, by one addressed with the title of Khwaja-i-Jahan, may Allah the Merciful protect him from all vicissitudes, in the frontier region, of Mubarakabad on the 20th Sha'ban in the year 863 of the Hijirah (25th June 1459) ; may the blessing of Allah be upon him and all his family."[4]

1. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, p. 34.
2. *J. A. S. B.*, 1910, p. 145.
3. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, p. 34.
4. Shamsuddin Ahmed, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. IV, Rajshahi, 1960, (hereafter referred to as *Inscription*), p. 63.

The inscription does not speak of the construction of a mosque but, as Maulvi Shamsuddin Ahmed rightly points out, the phrase "indicates that the gate mentioned here was already in existence but had fallen into dis-repair and that it was only repaired and rebuilt during this king's reign". If the inscription was in its original place, when found by Aulad Hasan, it provides a proof for the extension of the town towards this side. H. E. Stapleton seeks to connect the Mubarakabad territory, referred to in the inscription, with the name of Fakhruddin Mubarakshah, the Sultan of Sonargaon. According to him this "frontier territory" "included all old Vikrampur, i. e. those portions of the existing districts of Dacca and Faridpur, south of the Dhaleswari, which lay in the acute angle between the old course of the Ganges and the Meghna on the east. A relic of the *Iqlim* seems to be the *Mubarak Ujayl* mentioned in the *Ain* as a parganah of Sarkar Bazuha (*Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, Jarrett's Trans. p. 138). This still exists as a large parganah of the Dacca district, comprising much of the land south-west and west of Dacca town, between the Padma on the south and the Dhaleswari on the north."[1]

Tomb of Shah Jalal Dakhini : Tradition[2] also records that the saint Shah Jalal Dakhini is lying buried in a tomb within the compound of the Government House at Dacca, though the present building is of a much later date. Shah Jalal was a disciple of Shaikh Piyara. He came to Bengal and exerted a great influence on the people. The Sultan of Gaur became suspicious of his power and beheaded him in A. D. 1476.[3]

1. J. A. S. B., Vol. VI. 1910, p. 147.
2. Hakim Habibur Rahman, *Asudgan-i-Dhaka*, Dacca, 1946, (hereafter referred to as *Asudgan*) pp. 32 ff.
3. Dr. A. Karim, *Op. Cit.* pp. 120-21.

Other references to Dacca : These monumental remains and traditions of Dacca are supported by literary evidence as well. The earliest mention of the name of Dacca is found in an Arabic inscription of the time of the Bengal Sultan Ruknuddin Barbak Shah, dated 23rd February, A. D. 1460,[1] found in Birbhum district, West Bengal. The inscription speaks of the construction of a mosque by Ulugh Ajalka Khan. This Khan's father was Tarbiat Khan, who was *Sar-i-Gumashta* (chief controller) of *Qasba Dhakha-Khas*. Dr. M. R. Tarafdar[2] has rightly argued that this town can be no other than the present Dacca. The evidence indicates that the town was an important place a generation earlier than 1460, when Tarbiat Khan was posted here. Other references to Dacca are found in the *Akbarnama* and *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*. We find frequent mention of the place in *Akbarnama*[3] and in Inayatullah's continuation thereof, in the narrative of the wars of the Mughal Governors, Shahbaz Khan (A. D. 1583-85) and Mansingh (A. D. 1594-1606). We read of one Syed Husain, *Thanadar* of Dacca, who was taken prisoner by Isa Khan (died in 1599), the great *zamindar*.[4]

The City of Bengala : The prosperity af Dacca in the 16th and 17th centuries is inferred by Dr. Taylor on the basis of the identity of Dacca with Bengala of the European travellers. He writes : "It is not improbable that 'Baunoo Bazar and Teppun Gullee' was the city that is here alluded to, and that the name of Bengalla, by which one of its many bazars was known, was applied by Europeans, to the whole town, from the circumstance, perhaps, of this bazar being the place, in which trade was then chiefly carried on with foreigners. What tends to confirm this opinion

1. Shamsuddin Ahmed: *Op. Cit.* pp. 70-71.
2. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, Dacca, 1961, p. 278.
3. *Akbarnama*, tr. by H. Beveridge, Vol. III, pp. 1213-15 and 1236.
4. See above p. 20.

of the identity of Dacca and Bengalla, is the circumstance that only one of them is ever mentioned by the same traveller."[1] The last remark of Dr. Taylor is obviously not correct, for we are told by Mandelslo : On trouve plusieurs belles villes dan se Royaume, comme font celle de Gouro, d' Ougely, de Chattigan, de Bengale, de Tanda, de Dacca, de Patana, de Banares, d' Elabas, et de Ragmehela."[2] The whole problem has been discussed by Dr. D. C. Ganguli, citing the original authorities. He concludes, "There was no city properly called Bengala."[3]

Location of old Dacca : The details of pre-Mughal city of Dacca have been gleaned from *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi* by Dr. N. K. Bhattasali.[4] He writes "From the pages of Mirza Nathan, we get welcome glimpses of Dacca of the earliest days and of the water-routes leading to the city. The fighting forces that accompanied Islam Khan would be about 50,000 at a modest computation and the camp followers and the boatmen together would be even a greater number. With the sudden influx of a lakh of people, this modest Mughal outpost suddenly grew up into an important city and a new Mughal Dacca had to be quickly built up to accommodate the new arrivals......The old city and the new city could be clearly distinguished in 1610—11. Nathan and his father Ihtimam Khan were welcomed on their arrival at Dacca by Islam Khan himself who had reached the place ahead of them by two or three days by the land route. The Khans met and set out towards the fort of Dacca. They found that the river Dulai bifurcated into two branches before Dacca—one branch going to join the

1. Taylor. *Op. Cit.* p. 92.
2. *Les Voyages Du Sieur Albert de Mandelslo, tr.* by Sr. A. De Wicquefort, (Amsterdam, 1719) p. 290.
3. *I. H. Q.* Vol. XIX, 1941, pp. 297—317.
4. *Bengal : Past and Present,* Vol. LI, 1936. pp. 48—57.

Lakshya river at Demra and the other flowing down to join the Lakshya at Khizirpur. There is no mention of Buriganga, which is the present name of the river on which Dacca stands. The old name of the river was Dulai ....Buriganga now makes a sharp turn towards the south-west from Fatulla (old Dhapa) (i. e. from the point at which it turned towards Khizirpur) and joins the Dhaleswari. There are good reasons to hold that this outlet is a later growth and did not exist when Islam Khan came and occupied Dacca. The river on which Dacca stands emptied itself into the Lakshya by two mouths, one falling at Khizirpur, the northern part of present Narayanganj, and the other at Demra, about four miles higher up.

"At the point where the Dulai bifurcated, on either side of the branch running to Demra, there were two forts of Beg Murad Khan. Islam Khan placed Ihtimam Khan in charge of one and Nathan in charge of the other. Nathan had his house built near the western fort. This branch of the Dulai river is still a prominent feature of the city of Dacca. It is now called the Dulai canal and it goes north-east to join the Balu river, which again joins the Lakshya at Demra............It is in the very brief description of this journey (of Nathan) to Islam Khan's residence that we get a glimpse of the Dacca of 1611. Nathan started from his own house at the mouth of the Dulai canal and gradually came up to an old *Pakur* tree. Nathan says that this tree stood at the boundary between Old and New Dacca and was also midway between his residence and the residence of Islam Khan................ There is a *mahalla* called *Pakurtali* just on the road that we would expect Nathan to take from the mouth of the Dulai canal in his progress to residence of Islam Khan inside the fort. This place is now occupied by the Mitford

hospital and the Medical school............I think, it may not be unreasonable to suppose that *mahalla Pakurtali* is probably named after the great tree referred to by Mirza Nathan, especially because the place is actually midway between the site of the Old Fort and the mouth of the Dulai canal.

"A study of accompanying map (see Map no. 2) of the city of Dacca will further support this contention. It will be seen that an artificial canal starts from the Buriganga immediately east of Pakurtali and join the branch of the Dulai river that divides the city into two halves at the Malitola-Tantibazar corner of the town. This canal is undoubtedly artificial and appears to have been dug by Islam Khan to serve as a protective moat to his new settlement. *That part of the city which was surrounded by this moat, the two branches of Dulai river and the river Buriganga formed the Old town.* The *Tantis* (weavers) and the *Sankharis* (the conch-shell cutters) are universally believed to be the oldest inhabitants of Dacca and they still live in the centre of this area. All the other localities of this area bear Hindu names and names of the Hindu craftsmen—viz., Lakshmibazar, Banglabazar, Sutrapur, Jaluanagar, Banianagar, Goalnagar, Tantibazar, Sankharibazar, Sutarnagar, Kamarnagar, Patuatoli and Kumartoli. It will be seen, on the other hand, that all the principal Mughal antiquities are situated west of the canal, viz, the old fort, the Lalbagh fort, Shayesta Khan's palace, and mosque at Pakurtali, his mosque at Chauk, Shah Shuja's Bara Katra, and Shayesta Khan's Chota Katra. Many of the localities, here, also bear Muslim names. The existence of two Mughaltalis in the city is interesting. The one by the eastern bank of the branch of the Dulai that enters the town is called the *Purana*, i. e. the old Mughaltali. This was probably the abode of the Mughals, when they had only an outpost at Dacca. When Islam Khan built up a new Dacca, the

Mughals shifted within the area and founded the new Mughaltali." Hakim Habibur Rahman also says: 'Dacca of the Pathans (i. e. Pre-Mughal) really stretched from Masandi (Correctly Maveshi-mandi—Cattle market) northward to Pandu river, and on the west crossing Fulbaria to Chandni-ghat. The inside boundary was, on the east, Dulai river, on the south, the branch of the Dulai river, which coming to Bangsal passes under the bridges of Srichak and Chand Khan and through Bakhshibazar, and falls into the Buri-ganga east of the Chandni-ghat. This was also the western boundary."[1]

1. Habibur Rahman ; *Asudgan-i-Dacca*, introduction, p. 12 ; *Dhaka aj se pachas baras pahle*, Lahore, 1949, p. 12,

CHAPTER III

MUGHAL DACCA

(1608-1765)

Change of Capital : The Mughals continued, in the early years, to rule from Gaur, or its neighbouring cities of Tanda, or Rajmahal (re-named Akbarnagar). It was from these western capitals that the governors sallied forth towards the east in order to force their authority on an unwilling people now subject to a large number of local *zamindars*, called *Barabhuinyas*, who often turned against the Mughal overlordship. The turmoil lasted through the entire reign of Akbar the Great, and despite many Mughal victories in the battle-fields, the rebellious *zamindars* remained unsubdued. With the enthronement of Jahangir and the consequent appointment of Islam Khan to the governorship of Bengal, a new policy was adopted. Islam Khan came with a firm determination not only to suppress the *zamindars* but to crush their power by sitting in the very heart of their den and to win the support of the people by promulgating peace and prosperity in the province. The most redoubtable *zamindar* was Musa Khan,[1] who "inherited from his father a vast territory comprising about a half of the present Dacca district, half of modern Tippera, almost the whole of Mymensingh, except Sushang (the domain of Raja Raghunath) and a portion ceded to Khwaja Usman, and perhaps some portions of the present Districts of Rangpur, Bogra, and Pabna. The centre of Musa Khan's political authority was, however, the strategic region south-east of modern Dacca, where the Ganges (Padma), the Lakhiya,

1. He was the son of Isa Khan (see above p. 20).

and the Brahmaputra (Megna) formerly met. According to the *Baharistan*, Musa Khan's fort of Khizrpur stood near the confluence of the river Dulai and the river Lakhiya, commanding the only water route to Dacca from this side. Opposite Khizrpur on the river Lakhiya stood Katrabhu, the family residence of Musa Khan, and opposite modern Narayanganj stood Qadam Rasul, another fortified post of Musa Khan. About three miles east of Khizrpur and nine miles south-east of Dacca stood Sonargaon, the capital. It was also strongly fortified, and served as an important port. Another important post of Musa Khan was Jatrapur, which at that time stood at the confluence of the channel where the Ganges, the Dhaleswari and the Ichhamati met."[1]

It was to meet the challenge of the greatest foe of the Mughals that Islam Khan started from Rajmahal with determination. Moving with caution and full preparation he faced the war-boats of Musa Khan in the flooded rivers around Dacca. The river Sita Lakhya (the white goddess of Lakshmi) bore Musa Khan's defenders on the left bank and Islam Khan's forces on the right. The white water was reddened with the flow of blood oozing from thousands of bravos falling into the river. But the sun of Musa Khan was doomed to set for ever. His strongholds were captured one after the other by the Mughals. "These successive defeats so thoroughly unnerved Musa Khan that he thought it unsafe to stay even in his capital. He evacuated Sonargaon and retreated to the island of Ibrahimpur (another island in the Megna which cannot now be traced), whence he summoned Mirza Mumin to meet him with all his family and belongings. Haji Shamsuddin Baghdadi, the officer in charge of Sonargaon, then submitted to Islam Khan and formally handed over the city to him. With the fall of

1. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 238-9.

Sonargaon (c. middle of April. 1611) the war with Musa Khan practically ended. The surrender of the capital broke the back of his opposition and symbolised his final acknowledgment of failure."[1]

The centre of the Mughal activity all through this time of fighting was Dacca, which had been earlier strengthened by the Mughals as a *thana.* Now with the coming of Islam Khan Dacca first became a military head-quarter, and with the transfer of the civil officers from Rajmahal, Dacca became the real capital of the Mughal *Subah* of Bengal. This transfer of the capital was not the outcome of a pre-conceived plan on the part of Islam Khan, but rather the result of the exigencies of circumstances.[2]

Date of the New Capital : The establishment of the capital at Dacca by Islam Khan is dated to April, 1612,[3] by Dr. S. N. Bhattacharya. He says, "With the submission of the Kachar king about the end of May, 1612, the process of conquest and consolidation initiated by Islam Khan practically reached its completion, and the whole of Bengal, including Sylhet and Kachar, was now brought under the effective control of the Mughal government. Islam Khan now signalised the final establishment of imperial authority over the entire province by the inauguration of Dacca, the scene of his activities for the last two years, as the new capital, in place of Rajmahal. He renamed the city Jahangirnagar in honour of the reigning sovereign."[4] But

1. *Ibid,* p. 259.
2. The suggestion of Charles Stewart that the Portuguese and Mugh piracy led to the transfer of the capital is not borne out in the *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi.* See Stewart's *History of Bengal,* pp. 232-33 and 237.
3. *History of Bengal,* (Dacca University) Vol. II. p. 284.
4. *Ibid,* p.283.

such a ceremonial announcement of the new capital is not attested by *Baharistan*. On the other hand, *Mirza Nathan calls it Jahangirnagar from the first day Islam Khan entered Dacca.* Therefore, there is no reason to fix the arbitrary date 1612 for the establishment of the new capital. This date does not mark the end of Islam Khan's campaign in Bengal. In the following year we find him sending troops for the conquest of Kamrup. The only date which may be taken for the commencement of the new capital is the time when Islam Khan entered Dacca towards the end of July, 1608.[1]

From 1608 to 1717 Dacca remained the seat of government, except for a break between 1639 and 1659, when the Mughal viceroy, prince Shah Shuja, shifted his residence to Rajmahal for his own personal and political reasons. But for purposes of administration Dacca remained the capital even during this interval. There was no break in the expansion of the city. Dacca reached its greatest extent under the Mughals, and the real credit for the development and embellishment of the city goes to the Mughal governors. This prosperity lasted actually till 1706, on which date prince Azim-ush-Shan left Dacca. Officially the capital was removed to Murshidabad in A. D. 1717.

Dacca became the Chief Emporium : Dacca rose from the humble position of a military outpost of the Mughals and the head-quarter of their *Thanadar* to be the queen of the cities of Eastern India. Its importance lay not only in being the capital of the province, but also in monopolising the trade and commerce, which were formerly

1. For discussion see *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, Eng. Tr. by Dr. M. I. Borah, Vol. II, pp. 813-14 ; and *Bengal : Past and Present*, Vol. LI, 1936, pp. 48-9.

carried on by the neighbouring city of Sonargaon, a city whose prosperity was destroyed by the forces of Islam Khan and importance reduced by the shifting of the course of Meghna. What Sonargaon was in the 14th and 15th centuries, as attested in the annals of the Chinese travellers[1] and the accounts of Ibn Battutah,[2] Dacca attained in the 16th and 17th centuries. Dacca became the chief emporium for the products of Bengal, and all the foreigners flocked in its streets to open their commercial centres, and rushed into the markets for the purchase and sale of commodities.

Defence of Dacca : The city was well protected by a number of forts, which were meant to check the advance of the Portuguese and Mugh pirates. The danger from this source can be read in the accounts of Shihabuddin Talish, who writes, "In Jahangir's reign, the pirates used to come to Dacca for plunder and abduction, by the *nullah* which leaves the Brahmaputra, passes by Khizirpur and joins the *nullah* of Dacca. Khizirpur is situated on the bank of the Brahmaputra on a narrow embankment (*al*). In the monsoons, all the land except the sites of the houses is covered with water. The Governors of Dacca, therefore, at the end of the monsoons and during the winter which was the season of the coming of the pirates, used to go to Khizirpur with an army and encamp there. After some years, the *nullah* dried up and many places in the track of the pirates on the Brahmaputra river also became fordable. Thus their water-route to Dacca was closed on this side and restricted to the side of Jatrapur and Bikrampur. Recently, as the pirates could more easily carry out their chief design of kidnapping men in the villages of Dacca and other parganas, they did not exert themselves to reach Dacca town."[3]

1. *Vishwabharati Annals*, Vol. I, pp. 96-134.
2. H. A. R. Gibb, *Travels of Ibn Battutah*, pp. 213-4.
3. J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 127.

In order to check these pirates, the forts were built at the junction of water-routes that led to Dacca. One of them was the *Old Fort* of Dacca, the site of which is occupied by the modern jail. When was this fort constructed and who constructed it ?

Small forts serving as *choukis* or guard-houses were rather abundant in this region. Mir Jumla further added to their number during his viceroyalty. The two forts of Beg Murad Khan on either side of the off-take of the channel running to Demra have already been mentioned. Two other forts are found marked on Rennell's map (See map no. 1) one on either side of the river Fatulla. The eastern one is called the Kella of Dhapa and the western one is left without a name. On the Lakhya mouth of the Dulai there was the fort of Khizirpur (also called Hajiganj), and about a mile down the river Lakhya, on its eastern bank, stood the fort of Sonakanda, still in an excellent state of preservation. Almost direct south from this point on the southern bank of Ichhamati, now merged into the Dhaleswari, stood the fort of Idrakpur, now in the town of Munshiganj. The fort of Sonakanda gives an idea of what these forts were like.[1] Mirza Nathan speaks of an old and dilapidated fort in this region, originally built by the Raja of the Mughs, subsequently repaired by Musa Khan and put in a state of defence during his struggle against the Mughals.[2] This appears to be identical with the fort that we still find at Sonakanda,[3] almost opposite the present Railway and Steamer station at Narayanganj. The fort at Dacca appears originally to have been a similar guard-house of the Dacca *chouki* of the Mughals. It was in existence before Islam Khan came to Dacca. Mirza Nathan writes, "In Bengal, there were no ancient forts except

1. See chapter X for the description of forts.
2. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, p. 58, wrongly attributes them to Mir Jumla.
3. *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, Vol. I, p. 86.

those at Gour, Akbarnagar alias Rajmahal, Ghoraghat, Dacca and some other place of this type. But in time of need, the boatmen quickly construct such a fort that even the expert masters are unable to build one like it within months or years."[1] This remark, which was made before the Mughal army reached Dacca, suggests that Dacca had a fort before Islam Khan reached.

Early Building Activity in Dacca : Islam Khan sent two of his officers along with subordinate *mansabdars* to Dacca much ahead of him. Mirza Nathan says that these men "became engaged in the construction of the fort of Dacca."[2] This passage, according to Dr. N. K. Bhattasali, "can be interpreted only as showing that the fort at Dacca already existed before the arrival of Islam Khan, and all that his lieutenants could be expected to do in two weeks was to put it into a good state of repair, and make it fit to receive the governor."[3] If this is correct, we have to modify the popular notion that Islam Khan constructed a fort here. Similar mis-conception is current about Ibrahim Khan Fateh-Jang, the 3rd Mughal Governor of Dacca. He is also credited with reconstructing this fort[4] and building a palace at Zinjira[5] (*Jazira*—Island). In the contemporary account of *Baharistan*, no credit for such a construction is given to Ibrahim Khan inside the Old Fort. This palace is highly spoken of by Mirza Nathan in connection with the coming of the rebel prince Khurram (later known as Shah Jahan), who defeated and killed Ibrahim Khan and wrested Bengal for himself, though for a short time.

1. *Ibid.* p. 57.
2. *Ibid.* p. 54.
3. *Islamic Culture.* Vol. XVI, 1942, p. 395.
4. S. M. Taifoor, *Glimpses of old Dhaka*, Dacca, 1952 (hereafter referred to as *Glimpses*), p. 41 ; Y. M. Roy, *Dhakar Itihasa*, Vol. I. p. 339.
5. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, p. 44 ; Rahman Ali, *Tawarikh-i-Dhaka*, p. 283.

Extent of the then Dacca : So far the extent of the city did not seem to have gone much beyond the Old Dacca. In the new extension the Old Fort played an important part. It "had two gateways called *Purab Darwaza*[1] and *Pachchhim Darwaza*, by which names the areas are still called. Round about the fort there were Padshahi Bazar (now Chouk Bazar), Peel Khana, Mahaot-toli[2] (i. e. the quarter of the elephant drivers) and so on, all of which still retain their original names. The whole area of Bakshi Bazar and Dewan Bazar contained the residence of Provincial ministers, dewans and secretaries."[3] Two localities in the Ramna area were also settled, and were known as *mahalla* Shuja'tpur and *mahalla* Chishtian. In these localities we hear of two or three storied mansions, bungalows and spacious halls for reception. We also read of *Bagh-i-Badshahi* (Imperial Garden) at Jahangirnagar, where Islam Khan was originally buried.[4] This garden is generally located in the area where the modern High Court building and race-course are situated.[5] The present Shahbagh lies on its western border and preserves the old name.

First Christian Mission in Dacca : During the early years of the Mughal rule in Dacca the Augustinians had already opened their mission here. In 1599, five of them arrived in Bengal, Father Bernard de Jesus being appointed Vicar-General. In 1616, Dacca, Sripur, Hughli and Pipili became the official missionary centres.[6]

A Mugh Raid on Dacca : Manrique, who came to Dacca in 1640, describes a Mugh raid, which took place in 1626.

1. It faces now Abul Hasnat Road.
2. Mahaot-toli is really named after Mahaot Ali Sonulla (correctly Sanaullah) See map no. 4.
3. Taifoor, *Glimpses*, p. 41 ; Y. M. Roy, *Dhakar Itihasa*, Vol. I, p. 339.
4. *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, Vol. I, p. 257.
5. Taifoor, *Glimpses*, Appendix, pp. 188-99.
6. *Travels of Manrique*, Vol. I, Introduction, pp. XXV and XXVI.

"The Magh king Xandramax invaded the Mogol coast with a fleet of seventy Goleotas and five hundred Gelias carrying thirty Portuguese and other Christians who were in their service. They put the vessels carrying these men in the van of the fleet on reaching the great and famous city of Daack. On this the Mogols defending the coast, imagining that there was a strong force of Portuguese, lost heart and left their positions to join a body of three thousand horse, which was all that was then present there, owing to the Nababo's absence. They made little resistance to the landing of the enemies' forces, appreciating that such defence of the city as was possible lay solely with them, since their fleet had acted so pusillanimously at the first onslaught of the Portuguese Gelias, that they had at once turned tail, leaving several vessels as prizes to the victorious Lusitanians. As soon as they had landed, these latter threw the Mogols into confusion by their musketry and drove them out of their usual apathy, so that in under an hour they had put them to full flight. The Magh king thus landed without any opposition, taking possession of the Nababo's palace in which, as well as in the Cataris (*Khatri*—the merchant men) houses, he found great wealth. But he lost the principal wealth, that in the emperor's Nacassar (treasury). For, as soon as the Mogols learnt of his landing, they removed the treasure inland ; so the Magh king was not so satisfied as he had hoped to be.

"The Magh king spent three days sacking the city, the sufferings of its wretched inhabitants acting as gruesome obsequies. After setting fire to it in various parts, he had the Nababo's palace destroyed and levelled to the ground, as he had received the news that a great force of cavalry had been mustered............Accordingly, he re-embarked in his fleet, leaving in ruins the greater part of that beautiful city, which owing to weakness of the fleet the Magh had

so easily entered."[1] The city recovered soon from this great disaster. The ruined fortress and palace were reconstructed by Islam Khan Mashhadi,[2] who was governor of Bengal between A. D. 1635-1639.

Dacca Under Shah Shuja : In the development of the city the next important stage came in the time of prince Shah Shuja who governed Bengal from 1639 to 1660 with brief absence between 1647-48 and in 1652. He himself lived at Rajmahal on the frontier, close to Bihar, while a deputy, Mir Abul Qasim, governed Lower Bengal from Dacca.

Extent of the City : Manrique, who came here in 1640, describes : "This is the chief city of Bengala and the seat of the principal Nababo or Viceroy, appointed by the Emperor, who bestowed this viceroyalty on several occasions, on one of his sons. For, this city is today, as I said, the chief city, and as such, the metropolis of those in Bengala. It stands in a wide beautiful plain on the banks of the famous and here fructifying Ganges (really Buriganga) river, beside which the city stretches for over a league and a half. The well-known suburbs of Manaxor (Maneswar) at one end and of Narandin (Narinda) and Fulgari (Phulbaria) at the other serve to round off the city suitably. These suburbs are Christian settlements, in which my Sacred order possesses a picturesque though small Monastery with a good church. Here the celebration of Divine worship in the midst of this vast Paganism also teaches it the real road to salvation."

1. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 279-80. Compare Shihabuddin Talish, *Fathiyah Ibriya*. In *History of Bengal* Vol. II, p. 314, f. n. 1, the date of this raid is wrongly given as 1625.
2. Y. M. Roy's *Dhakar Itihasa*, Vol. I, p. 339.

Commercial Prosperity according to Manrique: He continues: "Many strange nations resort to this city on account of its vast trade and commerce in great variety of commodities, which are produced in profusion in the rich and fertile lands of this region. These have raised the city to an eminence of wealth which is actually stupefying especially when one sees and considers the large quantities of money which lie principally in the houses of the Cataris (*Khatri*), in such quantity indeed that, being difficult to count, it used commonly to be weighed. I was informed also, that *the indigenous population of this Gangetic emporium and its suburbs exceed two hundred thousand* irrespective of visitors who came in great numbers from all parts. Some of these came on mercantile business in order to take advantage of the great facilities offered by the place; others, followers of Mars, attracted by the high mainas (*mahina*—month), that is monthly pay and allowances which are given on those frontiers. Nor was one less astounded at the great profusion to be found there of every kind of useful article and every species of food which a human being could desire, especially in its numerous Bazares or markets. I used to be surprised at the number and varieties of domesticated and wild birds sold alive in them at very low rates, indeed almost given away. Thus for less than one silver real (4 annas) one could often purchase twenty turtle-doves or fifteen big wild pigeons, while other articles of the same kind sold at about similar prices. The vast pecuniary advantages derived by the Emperors and Mogol Rulers from this city are incredible. I will, therefore, leave it there, merely stating what I have had it told me as an indisputable fact, that from the Betel or Indian leaf alone they received in dues four thousand rupees a day, that is two thousand *pesos* in our money. What added materially to the riches of this city was the juxtaposition of the fertile and pleasant principalities of Baçala (Bakarganj district),

Solimanvas (Sulaimanabad in west Bakarganj), and Catrabo (Katrabuh in Manikganj sub-division)."

Foreign Trade : Manrique writes : "So extensive is the trade that over one hundred vessels are yearly loaded up in the ports of Bengala with only rice, sugar, fats, oils, wax and other similar articles. Most of the cloth is made of cotton and manufactured with a delicacy and propriety not met with elsewhere. The finest and richest muslins are produced in this country, from fifty to sixty yards long and seven to eight hand-breadths wide, with borders of gold and silver or coloured silks. So fine, indeed, are these muslins that merchants place in hollow bambus, about two spans long, and thus secured, carry them throughout Corazane (Khorasan), Persia, Turkey, and many other countries."[1] We are informed by another traveller : " From Dacca the chief commodities brought are fine Cossas (Khasa), commonly called Muzlinge (Muslin)."[2]

For the next twenty years from 1660 to 1679 the bulk of available sources for the history of Dacca greatly increase. A number of European travellers came to Bengal and have left behind their accounts of Dacca.

Tavernier's Account of Dacca : In 1666 Tavernier came to Dacca and saw the new problems that faced the city. He says : "Formerly the Governors of Bengala resided here (Rajmahal) ; it being an excellent country for hunting, besides that it was a place of great trade. But now the river having taken another course, above a good half league from the city, as well for that reason, as to keep in awe the king of Aracan, and several Portuguese banditii, who

1. *Travels of Manrique*, Vol. I, pp. 56-57.
2. Thomas Bowrey : *Bay of Bengal*, p. 230.

are retired to the mouths of the Ganges, and made excursions even as far as Dacca itself; both the Governor and the merchants have removed themselves to Dacca, which is at present a large city, and a town of great trade."[1] This circumstance explains why Mir Jumla chose Dacca to be his residence. He goes on to say: "Dacca is a great town, that extends itself only in length; every one coveting to have an house by the Ganges side. The length of this town is above two leagues. And indeed from the last brick bridge (i. e. Kadamtali) which I mentioned to Dacca, there is but one continued row of houses separated one from the other; inhabited for the most part by carpenters, that build galleys and other small vessels. These houses are properly no more than paltry huts built up with bambouces, and daubbed over with fat earth. Those of Dacca are not much better built; the Governor's palace is a place enclosed with high walls, in the midst whereof is a pitiful house, built only of wood. He generally lodges in tents, which he causes to be set up in a great court of that enclosure. The Hollanders finding that their goods were not safe in the ordinary house of Dacca, have built them a very fair house; and the English have another, which is reasonably handsome. The church of the Austi Friars is all of brick, and is a very comely pile............The next day after my arrival at Dacca, which was the 14th January, I went to wait upon the Nabab; and presented him with a garment of cloth of gold, laced with a gold-needle-work lace of point of Spain, with a scarf of gold and silver of the same point, and a very fair emerald-jewel. Towards evening, being returned to the Hollander's house, where I lodged, the Nabab sent me granates, China-oranges, two Persian melons, and three sorts of pears."[2]

1. Tavernier's *Travels in India,* p. 100.
2. *Ibid.* pp. 103-4.

Portuguese in Dacca : The earliest European people who came to Dacca, were the Portuguese, whose mission was established as early as 1616. These settlers did not belong to the other section of the Portuguese who were powerful in Sondweep and in Arakan, and who, during Shaista Khan's viceroyalty, settled in Dacca at a place called Feringi Bazar. In fact, when Shaista Khan was bent upon the conquest of Chittagong, he sent Shaikh Ziauddin Yusuf to the original Portuguese settlers trading in salt in Loricol near Dacca, asking their countrymen in Chittagong to abandon the king of Arakan and enter the Mughal service.[1] They, having agreed to do so, were given by Shaista Khan the land known as Feringi Bazar. About twelve miles from the city, on the banks of the Ichhamati, lies this Feringi Bazar. Dacca possessed another relic of the Portuguese, the Portuguese Factory, a part of which existed in 1905 near the church of C. L. Rosary. Bradley-Birt remarks, "All that remains today of the various factories (in Dacca) is a portion of the house which the Portuguese once made their head-quarter. It must have been in those days fine commodious building, but like every thing else in the city of the long sleep it is sadly fallen and decayed retaining but a memory of its better days."[2] Another church of theirs still survives four miles away from the city at Tejgaon, which was originally built in A. D. 1677.[3]

Dutch in Dacca : The Dutch had their factory by the riverside on the site on which the Mitford Hospital stands at present. They had also a garden house at Tejgaon. They appear to have come here much earlier than the

1. Shihabuddin Talish, cited in "The Conquest of Chatgaon" *J.A.S.B.* 1907, p. 407.
2. *Romance of an Eastern Capital*, p. 286.
3. For description see Ch. VIII.

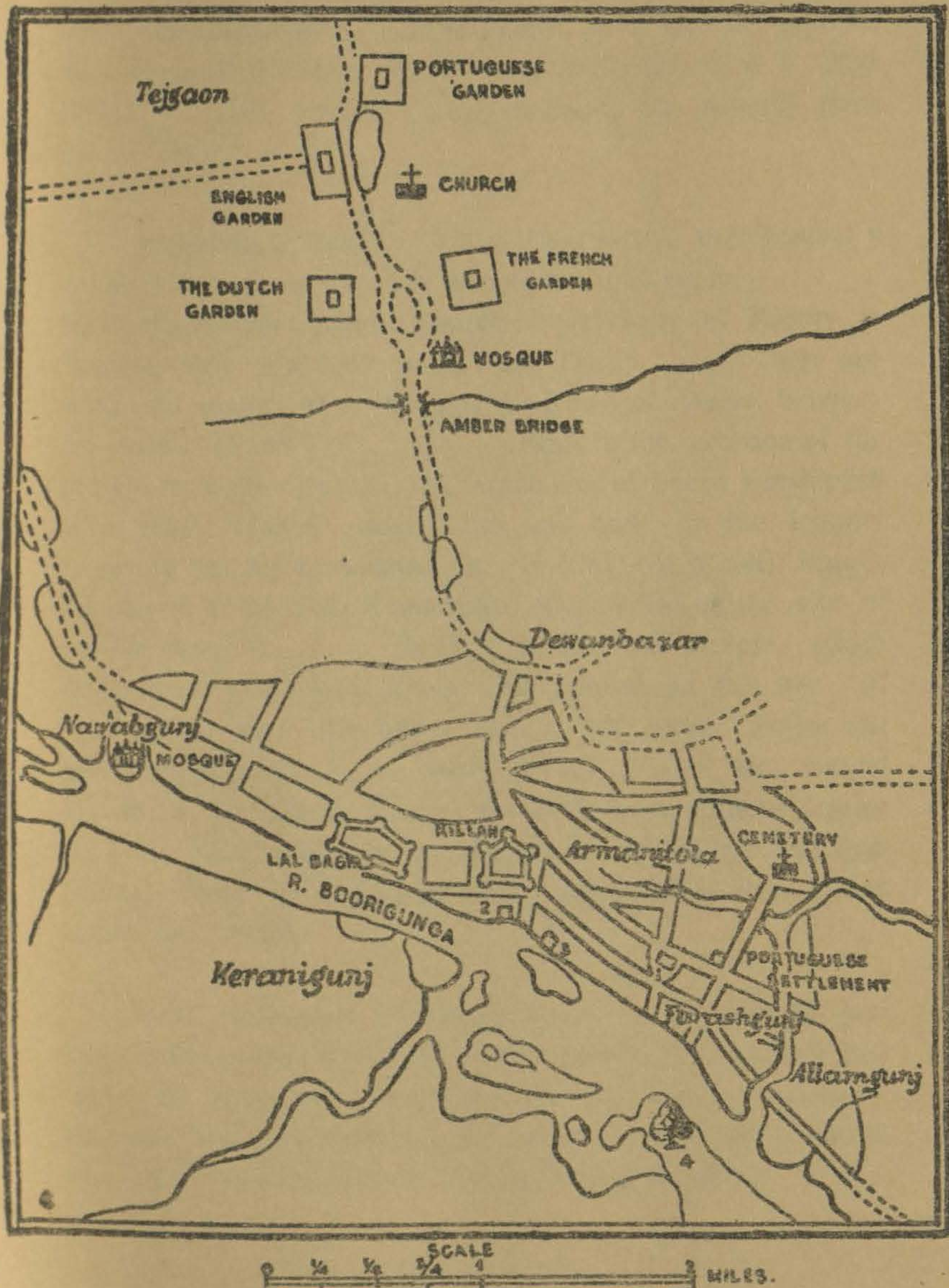
English. Shaista Khan endeavoured to enlist the support of the Dutch, and sent his men to them asking them to join in exterminating the pirates and subduing the kingdom of Arakan. The General of the Dutch Company, anxious to break the power of the Portuguese, readily consented and dispatched two men-of-war to join the Mughal fleet in the Bay. But Shaista Khan meanwhile won over the Portuguese in Sondweep. The two Dutch men-of-war arrived later, and Shaista Khan, freed for the moment from fear of the Portuguese, now saw his way clear without the embarrassment of outside help, and politely thanking them for their goodwill, gently hinted that he had no further use of them. Bernier writes : "I saw these ships in Bengal and their commanders, who were but little contented with such thanks and liberalities of Shaista Khan." In 1781, the Dutch property was surrendered to the English, but it was not till 1834 that it was formally transferred. Beyond the grave of a Dutch chief, who died in 1776, in the cemetery at Wari, there is no other Dutch relic now in Dacca.[1]

French in Dacca : "The French came later (than the English), but they acquired a great deal more property. Besides the factory which stood where the Ahsan Manzil now is, and a garden house at Tejgaon, they held whole of Farasganj. The first reference I find to them are that they had boats going to Dacca in 1682 and that their chief in 1690 was M. Gregory. The main event connected with French was in connection with the seizure of the English Factory in 1750. The French chief intervened with the Naib Nazim, Jasarat Khan, on behalf of the English residents and afforded them his hospitality till the crisis had passed."[2] The history of the last chief, M. Courtin and the end

1. *Dacca Review*, Vol., IX, 1920 p. 230.
2. *Ibid.* pp. 132-73.

Map No. 8

EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT IN OLD DACCA



1. ENGLISH FACTORY. 2. DUTCH FACTORY. 3. FRENCH FACTORY. 4. THE GREAT TREE.

of the Dacca Factory are connected with the fall of Sirajud-daula, the last Muslim ruler of Bengal, in 1757. Its account may be read in *Three French Men in Bengal*, by S. C, Hill (1903) pp. 132-73. French Factory in Dacca was actually given up in 1774.[1]

Armenians in Dacca : "Armenians settled and founded a colony at Dacca in the early part of the 18th century………… Inside the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of Rosary at Tezgaon, two and half miles from Dacca…………there are some old graves of Armenians who died at Dacca between the years 1714 and 1795………… Prior to the erection of the present Armenian church, the Armenians of Dacca worshipped at a small chapel which they had built in the locality known to this day as Armanitola. In 1781, the present beautiful church of the Holy Resurrection was erected on the site of the old chapel………… In 1837, a beautiful steeple, which was to serve as a clock tower, was erected on the west of the church, near the belfry, but it fell down during the severe earthquake………in June 1897………… The ground on which the church stands, was used as a cemetery prior to 1781. The extensive ground was the gift of Aga Catchick Minas, whose wife, Sophie, who died in 1764, lies buried inside the church.

"The Armenians at Dacca were the pioneers of jute trade in the second half of the 19th century."[2] Prior to jute trade, the Armenians, according to Dr. Taylor, "carried on extensive trade in cloth, salt and betel nut, held Zemindaries, some of which are still possessed by their descendants."[3]

1. *Bengal : Past and Present*, Vol. XLII, 1931, pp. 48-54.
2. *Armenians in India*, pp. 571-75.
3. Taylor's *Topography of Dacca* p. 254.

Greeks in Dacca : Dr. Taylor writes : "The Greeks established themselves in the city at a later period. Alexis Argyree, the founder of the Greek community in Calcutta died here in 1777, and left considerable property, which was divided among his sons, who took up their abode in Dacca and Backergange. Their church was built in 1821, the priest attached to it belongs to the monastery of Mount Sinai. Like the Armenians, the Greeks were chiefly engaged in the inland trade, and there were a few who still deal extensively in salt at Narayanganj."[1] The most prominent Greeks at present in Dacca are the Rally Brothers, who have a Jute Factory at Narayanganj. The Greek church fell down in 1897, and thereafter it was never built. Detailed description of this church has been given by C. J.C. Davidson, who visited Dacca in 1840.[2]

Englishmen in Dacca : The first Englishman known to have been in Dacca was one James Hart, but who or what he was cannot be ascertained. He appears to have been here in 1658, for a claim was set up to the Company's factory by a man who produced a decree said to have been executed by Hart in that year.[3] J. T. Rankin writes : "By its letter to Hughly, dated 24th January, 1658, the Company sanctioned the establishment of an agency at Dacca ; it was not however recognised as a factory nor was the officer in charge known as Chief till Smith succeeded March in September, 1669. Who the pioneer on behalf of the Company was in 1658 is not known. The Dacca Diary mentions James Hart who made a gift of his ground, house and goods in 1658. He evidently terminated his residence in Dacca in that year and so he was not

1. *Ibid*, pp. 254-55.
2. *Bengal : Past and Present*, Vol. XLII, 1931, pp. 45-46.
3. *Dacca Review*, Vol. IX, 1920, p. 231,

likely to be the agent of the Company. Again, we know from Manucci and from the Hughli diaries that one Thomas Pratt was in Dacca as early as Mir Jumla's time and for some years later. Originally, in the Nawab's service he undertook the Company's business, either instead of or in addition to his work with the Nawab.

"In April, 1669, John March was sent to represent the Company at Dacca and John Smith went with him as second. When March left in September of that year, Smith remained as head of the Company's affairs and Samuel Hervy became second. By Clavell's order of 17th January, 1673, Smith was superseded by Robert Elwes who died at Dacca on 4th December, 1675, when Hervy acted as Chief till relieved by Hall in 1676.

" Fytch Nedham acted for a short time as Chief in 1676 until Hervy returned when he reverted to second under Hervy. The latter remained Chief till 1682, when he had to be relieved owing to ill health. One of the first things Hervy did as Chief was to have the factory enlarged and improved.

"In 1678 Mr. Matthias Vincent, the Chief at Hughly, visited Dacca to try and induce the Nawab to remit the two per cent customs imposed on the Company's trade. It is interesting to observe how he first visited 'the Prince's Duan', then 'the king's duan', then 'the Prince's Nazarr or controuler of the house' and so on. A few days later he was granted audience of the Prince to whom he presented 27 gold mohurs and 100 rupees in silver (the actual present, including two horses, was sent later). After nearly three months spent in constant visits, first to one official and then to another, Mr. Vincent obtained the Prince's order (or *Nishan*) for free trade, and left Dacca."[1]

1. *Ibid.* Vol. VIII, 1918-1919, pp. 1-3.

At this time the English Factory was at Tejgaon, the site now mostly included in the Agricultural Farm. It was moved into the city probably in 1735, and lodged in the place, now occupied by the State Bank Building near Victoria Park.

Dacca in the late 17th century : The foreign merchants had been attracted to Dacca for its rich commerce and trade. The presence of the Mughal prince Shah Shuja in Bengal had raised the status of the governor. His influence was so great that the neighbouring turbulent *zamindars*[1] easily submitted to him. Of his time two important monuments are in existence in Dacca—the *Bara Katra* near the Chouk Bazar and the *Great Idgah* near road no. 15 on the Satmasjid road in the Dhanmandi residential area. The next governor Mir Jumla, who was sent by the Delhi emperor Aurangzeb to overthrow his rival brother Shah Shuja, further enhanced the prestige of Dacca by his conquests in Assam and by promulgating new measures for the realisation of land revenue and control of the inland trade. During Mir Jumla's absence in Assam a severe famine visited Bengal, which lasted in some form for two years. In his time defence around Dacca was strengthened and effective steps were taken to stop the Arakanese and Mugh raids. But it was only in the time of the next governor, Nawab Shaista Khan, that the Arakanese were finally crushed, Chittagong was conquered in 1666 and renamed Islamabad, and the main port of Bengal was opened for foreign trade. However, this was rather too late, as the Europeans had already established their factories on the Hughli river and the movement of the business had already swung towards that river. Shaista Khan continued to rule here till 1688,

1. See *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 333, for Bahadur Khan,*zamindar* of Hijli, being over-awed by Shah Shuja.

with a break between 1678-9, when he was replaced by prince Muhammad Azam Shah, the third son of Aurangzeb.

On 14th August 1684, William Hedges[1] wrote, we are informed, the water of the Buriganga "rose so high that men waded to their middle in most of the streets."

During this period the city of Dacca extended to its fullest limit, and as we are told by Thomas Bowrey,[2] the area embraced 40 English miles. It stretched from Demra Khal on the east to Mirpur on the west beyond Satmasjid and from Buriganga on the south to Tongi on the north. While Mir Jumla built the bridges at Tongi and Pagla and also the fort at Idrakpur, Shaista Khan erected his palace, the *Chota Katra*, and a *bund* along the bank of the river Buriganga. It was in this palace that Tavernier paid him a visit. In *Naubahar-i-Murshid Quli Khani*[3] we are also informed that prince Muhammad Azam "lived at Dacca for one year, and issued certain ordinances whose effects are still to be seen. One of them was this : in Dacca during the heavy rains, much mud used to collect and men, horses and elephants found travelling very difficult. Azam Shah ordered a road to be laid with brick. In his time this road was so well laid that men on foot could easily travel on it during the monsoons. The Bengalis who had never seen a brick-paved road before, wondered at the sight and rejoiced. This practice continues even now, and many well-to-do men have laid down brick-covered roads. Near the Badshahi fort[4]

1. Henry Yule, *The Diary of William Hedges*, London, 1886-89, Vol. I, p. 159.
2. He wrote between 1669-79. See his *A Geographical Account of countries around the Bay of Bengal*, (Shortened as *Bay of Bengal*) Cambridge, 1905, pp. 149-51.
3. Quoted in J. N. Sarkar, *Bengal Nawabs*, Calcutta, 1952, p. 3.
4. Probably to be identified with modern jail, where we do not find any ruins inside.

of Dacca there was a marsh, where people used to snare (acquatic) birds. Inside the fort there was no place for the public audience except the Rang Mahal and the Hall of Forty Pillars built by Amir-ul-Umara Shaista Khan. Azam Shah had this marsh filled up in a short time and erected on the site a lofty Hall of Public Audience, and a band-room." Prince Muhammad Azam is also said to have commenced building the Lalbagh fort, where Shaista Khan fixed his residence during the second term of his office. A number of mosques, tombs and *Katras* were constructed in the city. The architectural style reached its zenith in this period. Dacca reached the peak of its prosperity. Rice and other necessaries of life were very cheap at this time. Rice was sold at 8 maunds per rupee. It is said that to commemorate this fact Shaista Khan, as he was leaving Dacca for good, ordered the western gate of the Old Fort to be closed, leaving instructions that the gate should remain closed till grain was again sold at that rate.[1]

With the departure of Shaista Khan the fortunes of Dacca gradually ebbed. His successors, Nawab Bahadur Khan and Ibrahim Khan II, were given to pleasure and greed. About Ibrahim Khan the *Dacca Diaries* record, "His Excellency been employed in the pleasures of hawking and hunting in which he takes great delight and is so often addicted to......"[2] During his time the *Zinjira* (correctly *Jazira* meaning island) *Palace* was built in Dacca. It stood on the other side of the river opposite the *Bara Katra*, with which it is said to have been connected by a wooden bridge thrown across the Buriganga. The palace was a grand building of beautiful architecture, surrounded by a moat. Tradition says that it was in this building that the

1. *Dacca Review*, Vol. IV, 1914, p. 152.
2. *Dacca Review*, Vol, IV, 1914, p. 21.

mother, the aunt, and the widow of the unfortunate Sirajuddaula were kept as prisoners, and it was from here that they were taken out and drowned. An octagonal tower and a few rooms are alone standing now.[1]

In A. D. 1696 prince Azim-ush-Shan, son of Bahadur Shah and grandson of Aurangzeb, succeeded Ibrahim Khan II as viceroy, but he did not make Dacca his head-quarters till 1702. In the meantime the work in Dacca was carried on by a Deputy Rahmat Khan.[2] Azim-ush-Shan built a palace for himself on the bank of the Buriganga at Poshta, about 300 yards south east of Lalbagh fort. Dr. Taylor writes, "Of the Pooshta residence the greater part has been carried away by the river, within the last twenty years, and there is now only a small portion of it standing."[3] Probably the locality of Azimpura is called after his name.[4] It was during the time of this prince that chief trouble in Dacca arose. The ruling emperor Aurangzeb forbade prince's private trade. Now Azim-ush-Shan could make money only by laying his hands on the state revenue and squeezing the people. This was objected to by the new *Diwan* Murshid Quli Khan, who tried to reduce the government expenditure and regulate revenue. A quarrel between the Viceroy and the *Diwan* arose, which forced Murshid Quli Khan to leave Dacca in 1704 and remove his office to Makhsusabad, later came to be known as Murshidabad. The emperor also ordered Azim-ush-Shan to leave Dacca and proceed to Patna. Dacca was left to the care of his young son

1. Taylor, *Topography of Dacca*, p. 97 ; Taifoor, *Glimpses*, pp. 110-1.
2. *Dacca Review*, Vol. VIII, 1918-19. p. 1.
3. Taylor, *Topography of Dacca*, p. 96.
4. Both S. M. Taifoor and Rahman Ali Taish give the name as *Azampura* and attribute it to prince Muhammad Azam Shah but I have followed Hakim Habibur Rahman.

Farrukh Siyar as *Deputy Subahdar*, who held the post till 1710. Though officially the *nizamat* remained at Dacca till Murshid Quli Khan was appointed governor in 1717, but the glory of Dacca was over in 1706 with the departure of prince Azim-ush-Shan. The prime position, which Dacca held for about one hundred years as the provincial capital of the Mughals in Bengal, departed for ever never to come back in the time of the Mughals.

Dacca under the Naib Nazims : On the transfer of the capital to Murshidabad Dacca became the seat of a *Naib Nazim* (deputy governor), who was appointed by the governor. Under them the administration of the city declined. Trade and commerce moved to Murshidabad and the confines of the Hughli river. Population thinned and the city impoverished.

Nawab Murshid Quli Khan appointed Lutfullah, who also bore the name of Murshid Quli Khan, as *Naib Nazim* of Dacca. He held that post till 1734 and was succeeded by Sarfaraz Khan, who, preferring to remain in Murshidabad, appointed Ghalib Ali Khan to administer Dacca for him, with Jaswant Rai as his *Diwan*. About the *Diwan's* work the *Riyaz* records, "In that the aforesaid Munshi had been trained up by Nawab Jafar Khan, by dint of honesty and integrity, by thorough attention to details and by ripe wisdom, he effected not only an increase in the state revenue but secured the happiness of the people. He completely abolished the system of *Sauda-i-Khas* (private business), and banished the exactions and innovations introduced by Mir Habib, during the regime of Murshid Quli Khan. Putting forth laudable efforts to keep down the selling rates of food grains, and effecting cheapness in their prices, he threw open the western gate of the fort of Jahangirnagar, which Nawab Amirul-Umara Shaista Khan had closed, inscribing on it a prohibition to the effect

that no one should open it, until he succeeded in reducing the price of food grains one sear of the Bazar weight per Dirham as was current in the Nawab's time."[1]

The successor of Ghalib Ali Khan was Syed Raza Khan or Murad Ali Khan, as the *Dacca Diaries*[2] record. During his time Raja Raj Ballabh came into prominence. When Ali Vardi Khan became the Nawab at Murshidabad, he appointed his son-in-law Nawazish Ali Khan to be *Naib Nazim* at Dacca, but Husain Quli Khan was sent to Dacca as his deputy. Soon after Husain Quli Khan left Dacca, appointing his nephew Husainuddin Khan to act in his place. Dacca was thus reduced to the government of a Nawab's deputy's deputy's deputy.

The sickening tale of bribery and corruption, which was rampant among the officials at Dacca at this time (or was it a natural growth of the loose system of the land customs under the Mughals ?) can be read in the *Dacca Diaries*. These demands of money were not considered as bribes but as presents for the concessions that they gave to the Company.

End of Mughal Rule : Under this condition Dacca passed on till the fateful change of government from the hands of the Muslims to those of the British. The Mughal *Nawabs* could not see the great change that was going on in the country before their very eyes. They were happy to maintain their precarious hold over a decrepit land-system, the produce of which had gone into the hands of the business class. Among them the European Companies were the most dominant. It is the influx of their money that

1. *Riyaz-us-Salatin*, Eng. Tr. by Abdus Salam, pp. 304-5.
2. *Dacca Review*, Vol. VIII, 1918, p. 111.

changed the pattern of Bengal's economy. While the Nawabs were satisfied with getting huge amounts in *pesh-kash* (present), their officials sold themselves for the wealth of the foreign merchants. Ultimately it is the greed of this wealth that brought an end to the Mughal rule in Bengal. How the final change of authority took place in Dacca is told in the words of a later *Naib Nazim* of Dacca : "On the death of Alleverdi, who had appointed Jusarut Khan Naib Nazim of Dacca, Surajahdowla became nawaub of Bengal ; and the following particulars are translated from a Persian document obligingly furnished by his highness Nusrut Jung, the present nawaub of Dacca.

"Surajahdowla soon commenced hostilities against the English. Having assembled a considerable army for the purpose of attacking and plundering Calcutta, he sent orders to Jusarut Khan to massacre all the English at Dacca, not sparing even the women and children ; to seize all the property belonging to individuals as well as that belonging to the East India Company, and to send the whole of the plunder to Rajah Mohun Lall at Moorshedabad. The command was peremptory and admitted not of a moment's delay, and its extreme cruelty threw Jusarut Khan into the greatest perplexity. To execute the orders of Surajahdowla on so many unoffending people, would be horrid and monstrous ; and resistance to the mandate of the tyrant threatened destruction on himself. Jusarut determined, however, on saving the English.

"Mr. Richard Becher being at that time agent for the English company at Dacca Jusarut Khan sent for him and all his countrymen to the fort, where they remained in confinement a day and a night but were abundantly supplied with what provisions and other necessaries they required. At the recommendation of Jusarut Khan they

entered into an engagement not to commit any act of hostility against Surajahdowla, and were then permitted to return to their houses in complete security. But all the public property was seized, and sent as required to Moorshedabad. Jusarut Khan wrote at the same time to Surajahdowla, stating that there could be no difficulty in slaughtering all the English at Dacca, but that their private property was inconsiderable, and themselves peaceable and inoffensive ; that it would be barbarous to murder so many innocent men ; that he had spared their lives, supposing that the order might have been issued in a moment of displeasure, without the expectation of its being carried into execution ; that he had secured the British inhabitants from attempting anything hostile, and that he waited further orders.

"Surajahdowla had at the time taken Calcutta, and though he made no reply, was exceedingly enraged at the conduct of Jusarut Khan and only seemed to wait for an opportunity to wreak his vengeance on him. Soon afterwards, however, the principal part of Surajahdowla's army deserted him, and went over to the English ; and this event put an end at once to the short, but rapacious, and bloody career of this tyrant.

"A few years afterwards when Kasim Khan was informed that Jusarut Khan had saved and protected all the English at Dacca, he ordered him to be brought from thence to Monghyr ; but instead of having him assassinated, as he had intended, he found it expedient to adopt another course. He kept him at Monghyr and ordered a letter to be written to his dewan, then at Dacca, directing him to put to the sword all the English inhabitants of that city without delay, and to plunder all the public and private property. The English, having information of this intended slaughter, precipitately abandoned their houses and property, and, under cover of night, embarked on board their boats,

intending to have proceeded to Calcutta. The next day when the natives, horse and foot, surrounded the factory, they perceived that the English had escaped and the factory was given up to plunder and violence ; but in the mean time Lieutenant Swinton arriving with troops from Luckipoor, the city after an obstinate contest, fell into his hands and the native troops fled to Monghyr."[1]

Rennell's note on Dacca : In February, 1765, Rennell came to Dacca for the purpose of survey. In his Journals he writes : "The Beurygonga or river on which Dacca is situated, is the Eastmost Branch of the river Ganges. Its breadth in general is about 250 yards, and its course in the neighbourhood of Dacca pretty streight from N. W to S. E. It is navigable in the dry season for the largest boats.

"The city of Dacca lies on the North-east side of this river and *extends near 4 miles along ye Bank*. The British Factory is nearly in Latitude 23° 40′ North, and stands near a quarter of a mile above high Water Mark. Its figure approaches nearest that of a square, whose sides are a little less than 100 yards. The French and Dutch Factories are smaller and lie further up ye river."[2] The extent of the city, given by Rennell, shows how much Dacca declined during the days of the *Naib Nazims*.

1. Charles D'Oyly, *Antiquities of Dacca*, pp. 16-18.
2. *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 40,

CHAPTER IV

MUGHAL NOBILITY

New Urban Pattern : From the tale of the city and the events that led to the political changes we now pass on to the people who were instrumental in creating a new cultural life in Dacca. The change from the old commercial activity of Dacca to the new official tone of life was definite and well marked, as the influx of the Mughal soldiery and their retinue led to a complete overhaul of the city life. Before the coming of the Mughals the Muslim populace in the city was only nominal. We have a record of only two mosques—Binat Bibi mosque and Naswalla-(correctly *Nasara*) galli mosque, two forts—Old Dacca fort and the fort of Beg Murad Khan, and two official ranks—*Sar-i-Gumashta* and *Thanadar*. We have preserved no Muslim names of locality from the pre-Mughal period.[1] But in and around Dacca there are some *dargahs*[2] of Muslim saints, which are traced back to the pre-Mughal period. The influence of these saints had already made the religion of Islam acceptable in the rural areas of this region. Of still greater importance was the pre-Mughal urban centre at Sonargaon, where for the past three hundred years, before Dacca assumed importance, Muslim culture had saturated in the life of the people. It is the descendants of these people in that locality, who still bear the titles of *Syed*, *Shah*, *Akhwand* or *Khwandkar*. Last but not the least were

1. Hakim Habibur Rahman refers the Purana Mughaltoli to the pre-Mughal period. If this is true, it could not have been before the posting of a Mughal *thanadar* here. (See the account on p. 26 above). Near the Old Fort was a *mahalla* called *Gird-i-Qila*, a name no longer current.
2. See chapter X for detail.

the free-lancer Afghans, who were let loose in Eastern India by their defeat at the hands of the Mughals. They represented the scattered force of Muslim authority in this region, and wherever they concentrated, they soon became petty lords. Munshi Rahman Ali Taish[1] traces their descendants in the *thanas* of Manikganj, Sabhar and Nawabganj in Dacca district. They are represented today by the persons who bear the title of Khan[2] in this region. This older Muslim populace chose mostly to remain in the villages. Very few[3] of them later settled in Dacca, the most important being the descendants of Musa Khan, after whom the Dewan Bazar is named, but this name will soon be forgotten when the modern one Nazimuddin[4] Road becomes more and more popular. The vast majority of the Muslim population in Dacca came in the wake of either Mughal conquest or along with the transfer of the Mughal officers. It is this gradual migration of the Muslim population from northern India that swelled the number of the Muslims in the city. It is they who kept up the contact[5] between Dacca and the cultural development of the Muslims that continued to grow in the years to come in upper

1. *Tawarikh-i-Dhaka*, p. 46.
2. e. g. Ataur Rahman Khan, ex-chief minister of East Pakistan, hails from the Afghan family settled long ago in the Dhamrai region of Dacca district.
3. Two well-known Syed families are—one of Syed Muhammad Taifoor of Kauser House Dacca, who belongs to the family of Hazrat Ibrahim Danishmand of Sonargaon; and the other is of Dr. Syed Sajjad Husain, Head of the Deptt. of English Dacca University, who belongs to the family of Mir Saheb of Mirpur.
4. named after Sir Khwaja Nazimuddin, a minister in pre-partition Bengal, later Governor General and still later Prime Minister of Pakistan.
5. cf. the similar remark of Sir Jadunath Sarkar in *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 188-89; in pp. 216-28 Sarkar exaggerates and attributes all cultural developments to the Mughal rule.

India. In this respect Dacca was more than any other town in Bengal. It shared fully the common heritage of the then Muslim world. While the scattered Muslim population in the villages lost contact with their brethren in northern India and merged themselves in the growing rural life of the country, Dacca alone held aloft the torch of urbanity and established a cultural standard that was always acceptable to the Muslim families in the country. However remote the Muslim families may be in the villages, we can detect the infusion of that culture that fired them to bid for a new home in Pakistan. This widely diffused cultural life of the Muslims in East Pakistan sustained their faith in spite of cataclysmic Nature, and during the Mughal period Dacca provided the norm for the establishment of social equilibrium.

Main builders : The social structure of the Mughals was firmly based on gradual evolution of an administrative pattern that linked up the village land economy of Bengal to the urban scene. The small scale industries, that were localised in certain areas, mainly met the growing needs of the cities. The transaction was originally in the hands of the *Shahas* or *Sahus* but the upper Indian *Beparis* and *Khatris* were rapidly monopolising the trade as the demand of the European merchants increased. The Mughals themselves were primarily agricultural lords and their system of administration was based on land pattern. Before this system broke, when faced with the new economic problem of the influx of foreign silver and gold, the Mughals had already evolved a society that was saturated with a particular tradition of Mughal life. In this tradition both Hindus and Muslims shared equally. The craftsmen class consisted mostly of the local people, but the business class attracted a large number of

upper Indian investors. The only people in Dacca, who ventured forth in this line, were the *Shahas*[1] and *Basaks*, who have maintained that tradition till today.[2] However, it is only in the administrative class that the Mughals have left behind a new terminology in the family titles, like *Shiqdar*, *Majumdar* (correctly *Majmu'dar*), *Samaddar* (correctly *Shama'dar*), *Sarkar*, *Qanungo*, *Choudhury* or *Roy-Choudhury*, *Tarafdar*, *Munshi*, *Ukil* (correctly *Vakil*), *Hazari* or *Hazarika*, *Bakhshi*, *Lashkar*, *Subedar* (correctly *Subahdar*) borne both by Muslims and Hindus. The other common form, *Mallick*, which is derived from the Arabic *Malik*, was very popular in the pre-Mughal period. These persons formed the back-bone of the Mughal culture and carried the traditions of urban life into the distant corners of the province. They were the intermediate section, and not the middle class in the modern sense, that established a common bond between the urban culture and the rural life of the people. The main builders, of course, lived in the towns, and Dacca was foremost in this respect, being the abode of the Mughal nobility. In this chapter the life of a few of them is given.

Princely Viceroys : The first among the nobility included a few Mughal princes who were appointed as viceroys in Dacca. But the first Mughal prince to come here was Khurram (later Shah Jahan), who rebelled against his father Jahangir and wrested Bengal for a time from the local governor. Mirza Nathan describes Khurram's arrival (May 1624) in Dacca in these words : "On the sixth day after departure from Akbarnagar alias Rajmahal, the Royal camp

1. The richest of them have the title of *Shankha-nidhi* (the owner of conches). The business was mostly carried on *cowries*, and in this category of currency conch is the highest denomination.
2. The well-known philanthropist of Dacca, R. P. Shah, belongs to this class.

was pitched at Yusuf Shahi alias Shahzadpur (in Pabna district). From here, on the fourth day, i. e. nine days after departure from Akbarnagar he (the prince) arrived in safety and happiness at Jahangirnagar. As the eunuch I'timad Khan had arrived there ahead of him and pacified all the officers, high and low, the Khans went out to receive him to a distance of one to two *kos* one after the other in accordance with their rank, and obtained eternal distinction. Every one of them was honoured with the presents of robe of honour, horse, shawl and other things according to his rank. Begum, the wife of the late Ibrahim Khan, with her whole family became honoured by kissing the ground. The dust of the arrival of that valiant champion of the field of bravery and manliness, the light of whole Hindustan, was made collyrium of her eyes, and she extended her hospitality (to the prince). His Royal Highness stayed at the delightful residence of Ibrahim Khan in the fort of Jahangirnagar alias Dhaka for a period of seven days, and after making satisfactory arrangements for all the *thanas* of Bengal and Kuch, he proceeded for the conquest of Patna."[1] We are not aware of any lasting influence of Khurram in Bengal, but the quotation just cited gives us an idea how a reception in those days was accorded to a prince.[2] The long trek that Khurram undertook from Rajmahal to Dacca on boat appears to have left some permanent impress on his mind. It is probably at this time that he became fond of bungalow type of buildings. When he became emperor of Delhi, he popularised this type in northern India.[3]

The next prince Shah Shuja ruled in Bengal for twenty-one years (1639-60), with two short periods of absence (1647-48 and 1652). He lived for the most part in Rajmahal,

1. *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, Vol. II, pp. 708-9.
2. See also next chapter.
3. For detail see A. H. Dani, *Muslim Architecture in Bengal*, Dacca, 1961, pp. 180-87.

but Dacca continued to grow. Shah Shuja was the first Mughal prince posted in Bengal as viceroy. "His position immediately below the emperor awed intending rebels into submission and envious rivals at court into silence, and there was no foreign incursion worth notice in the province during his viceroyalty."[1] Shah Shuja could well claim to his father, "The Zamindars of Morang, Kachar and other places, who had never paid tribute to any of my predecessors, have sent me ambassadors with letters professing loyalty and obedience and some elephants by way of present. I have promoted cultivation in both the Subahs."[2] During his rule large number of Shia families (see below) migrated to Dacca and introduced Persian scholarship and Iranian manners and social customs. His great influence also spread into the neighbouring Hindu kingdoms. The *Raja* of Tripura built a mosque in Comilla to commemorate his name. It is known as *Shuja Mosque*, and now stands in Shuja-ganj.[3]

The next prince is Muhammad Azam Shah, third son of Aurangzeb, who lived in Dacca about fourteen months in 1678-79. Sir Jadunath Sarkar notes, "No vassal chief durst raise his head, no commander durst complain to the Emperor and no official news-reporter had the imprudence to write anything against the maladministration of the Padshah's son. His lordly contempt for all other men is well illustrated in stories of his doings at Dacca that reached Assam and were recorded there shortly afterwards."[4] The prince had married an Assamese princess, later known as Rahmat Banu, who was the source of all the relations that then existed between Bengal and the Ahom kings. The Assamese chronicles call him *Sultan Azamtara*. They relate many stories about his adventures and hunting. Regarding his building

1. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 333.
2. Quoted in *ibid.* p. 333.
3. K. C. Sinha, *Tripurar Itihasa*, pp. 93-94.
4. *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 381-82.

activity they record, "He destroyed the quarters of Shaista Khan and erected his own residence at the same site. There was an extensive marsh over which a river had flowed before. It was filled up with bamboos and woods which were purchased at a cost of 80,000 rupees ; a market-place was constructed there with bricks and stones for the convenience of shop-keepers and tradesmen."[1] The market may be identified with *Qasr-hat*.[2]

The last prince to come to Dacca was Azim-ush-Shan, who, along with his son Farrukh Siyar, made himself very lovable to the people by participating in their festivities. He was also very fond of accumulating wealth. He tried to become the sole distributor of foreign merchandise, and with this object appointed several officers in different ports to purchase foreign goods, termed *Sauda-i-khas*, on his behalf. He was also very popular among his Hindu subjects, and used to observe with them the Hindu festival *Holi*, and sat in his *darbars* in saffron-coloured turban and red garment in imitation of Hindu princes. Farrukh Siyar has left behind a *Jami Mosque* as his memorial, now standing, in a renovated condition, to the south of the southern gate of the Lalbagh fort.

Governors of Dacca : Next in rank to the princes were the governors, who were mainly responsible for establishing peace and prosperity in the province and popularising the Mughal court life. The first of them was Shaikh Alauddin Islam Khan who was the grandson of Shaikh Salim Chishti, the famous saint of Fatehpur Sikri. He was given the *mansab* of five thousand by the emperor Jahangir and sent to Bengal with the specific instruction to crush the rebellions. Islam Khan had the good fortune of restoring order in the

1. S. K. Bhuyan, *Annals of the Delhi Badshahate*, Gauhati, 1947, p. 169.
2. See above p. 6.

province. His magnificent conquests led Jahangir to send the Iranian embasssy for a visit to Bengal. It is in the record of this visit that Mirza Nathan gives some ceremonial details : "In the meantime it occurred to the world-adorning mind of the Emperor to send everyone of the officers of the Embassy of the Shah of Iran to the provinces, particularly to Bengal, in order to show them the new conquests in those regions and then to send them back to the Shah. Therefore, one of the brothers Yadgar Ali Sultan, the ambassador of the Shah, was sent to Bengal ....Mirza Qasim, the *Khazanchi* of Bengal, accompanied the brother of the ambassador from the imperial court escorting him to Bengal. As he (Mirza Qasim) brought with him the imperial Farmans and gifts, so Islam Khan went forward to meet them. First of all he received the imperial Farmans and the robes of honour with due respects. After that he embraced the brother of the ambassador and returned with him to his residence. In order to show him due respects the army was posted on horseback, and all the people of the city high and low, came out on the street to see the brother of the ambassador in such crowds that no space was left vacant. People jostled against one another, and a great tumult arose. In short Islam Khan after reaching his home held a royal reception, and various kinds of food, drink, and fruits were served. After the conclusion of the feast, otto of roses was sprinkled. In the first entertainment which was held in the Subahdar's house, a sum of twelve thousand rupees was presented to the brother of the ambassador in twelve trays, and then Islam Khan retired for rest."[1]

At another place we read a description how Islam Khan assumed imperial prerogatives : "When the campaigns

1. *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, Vol. I, p. 212.

against the zamindars of Bhati and the expedition against Usman of Bukainagar, and those against Taraf and Matang ended satisfactorily, Islam Khan held a military review. He prepared a high platform higher than the height of two men and constructed a small house on it. It was named *jharuka*. The great officers, who could not attend to pay respects at the *chowki*, were offered to depute one of their sons or near relatives in their place and they were ordered to pass their time during the nights at the royal guard-house. The other officers were directed to make their obeisance, standing at the *qur* (standard)".[1] We also read "of the singers and courtesans of Islam Khan,"[2] who became so renowned that the emperor Jahangir sent his musician, Prem Ranga, to take the best of them. From another source we learn, "His virtue and gravity were such that probably in all his life, he never took part in drunkenness, or other forbidden things. Yet, in spite of this, all the saltatory troops in the whole of the province of Bengal consisting of *luti*, *hurkani*, *kanchi* (dancing girls) and *domni* (gypsies) were his servants and received from him Rs. 80,000/- a month, or nine lac sixty thousand a year. Men stood holding trays of jewels and silken stuffs, and he distributed them in presents............ He was not particular about his dress and wore a skull-cap *taqiya* under his turban. He wore a shirt under his tunic. From the dishes on his table 1000 poor were abundantly fed, but first they set before him bread of millet (*juwar* and *bajra*) and vegetables (*sag*) and dry rice called *sathi*."[3] It is after him that Islampur is named. There also exists a mosque, called *Islam Khan ki Masjid* in Sayid Aulad Hasan Lane (formerly called Ashiq Jamadar Lane). His relations lived in Mahalla

1. *Ibid*, p. 120.
2. *Ibid*, p. 224.
3. *Ma'sirul-Umara*, Vol. I, p. 696.

Chishtian, the locality around the *dargah of Chishti-Behishti* in the compound of the present Dacca High Court. Islam Khan's another relation was Shaja't Khan, who successfully commanded the Mughal forces[1] against the Afghan chief Usman Khan. It is after him that the *mahallah Shaja'tpur* (now Nilkhet area) was named.

The next important governor to come to Bengal was Ibrahim Khan Fateh-jang, who was the brother of Nur Jahan, the favourite queen of the emperor Jahangir. His period of governorship (1617-23) "is marked by peace and tranquillity unknown before". Summing up his achievements, Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes, "Ibrahim Khan organised only two expeditions, one against Tipperah and the other against Arakan, both of short duration. In regard to internal administration, he initiated a new policy of political conciliation and release of political prisoners which had beneficent effect. It promoted peace, security and good government. For the first time since the Mughal conquest, Bengal now settled down to enjoy blessings of the Mughal peace. Agriculture and commerce were encouraged, and the manufactures were carried to a degree of perfection they had never attained before. The delicate muslins of Dacca and the silks of Maldah constituted the chief part of the dress of the imperial court, and these industries received an impetus unknown before."[2] Mirza Nathan testifies to the bravery of the governor, "Whoever has any doubt about the bravery of the Nawab, ought to think that if the Nawab had no courage then he, being the ruler of the Subah of Bengal where in fact he occupies the place of the master and Qibla, would not have come personally with a few followers to fight with the Raja of the Mags and to give battle

1. *Ibid,* Vol. II, pp. 630-33.
2. *History of Bengal,* Vol. II, p. 299.

with a fleet of thirty boats against the fire-emitting fleet of two to three thousand boats of the Mags."[1] After the victory over the Raja of Tippera, Ibrahim Khan, "hearing good reports about the climate and beauty of the country of Tippera, intended to take a pleasure trip to that country and to return to Jahangirnagar after pacifying that region."[2] At another place we read how Mirza Nathan was recommended for promotion—a procedure which may astound the modern administrators. "Mirza Nathan, at a happy moment, presented before the Khan Fath-jang, the elephants and all the gifts brought by him and had to offer all of them as *peshkash* to the Khan. Over and above this *peshkash*, he presented the Khan with one hundred small and big boats. The Khan, highly pleased at this, sent representation, commending the devoted and loyal services of the Mirza to the sublime court and its officers, and particularly to her Majesty Nurjahan Begum, and prayed for the promotion of his rank and title. Therefore, it became incumbent upon the Mirza to send also a suitable *peshkash* to the court and rare gifts to her Majesty Nurjahan Begum, Nawab I'timaduddawla and the nobles of the court of the protector of the people. Accordingly, all the rare presents in his house as well as all the things purchased or obtained by him on credit together with a suitable elephant for His Majesty (may a thousand lives be sacrificed for him) and a female elephant for the Begum were sent to the Sublime Court in charge of Hatim Khan Afghan and one of his Hindu officers named Gopal Das. The total value of the *peshkash*, rare gifts and elephants amounted to rupees forty-two thousand."[3]

We also get a glimpse of the money deal in Dacca for state purposes in Mirza Nathan's description of the

1. *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, Vol. II, p. 631.
2. *Ibid*, p.628.
3. *Ibid*, pp. 628-29.

need of the boats for preparation for the battle. He requests the governor, "If it is not possible to provide boats from the State, please order me to procure these boats from the *Beparis* (traders) either on hire or purchase or by force for the execution of imperial affairs. I will pay the money from my own purse and will also manage to secure boatmen for these boats." Ibrahim Khan agreed to this and ordered him to procure (the boats) from whomsoever he could. The Mirza returned to his residence and appointed some of his trustworthy officers to accomplish this work. The merchant-princes of Jahangirnagar who were inclined to transanct business with him advanced Rs. 100,000/- to him against deeds of loan (*tamassukat*). His officers brought the boats of *Beparis*. Those who agreed to give the boats on hire sent their boatmen and gave security for their presence. The rate of hire was fixed and they were paid. Price was immediately paid to those who agreed to sell. Seven hundred boatmen were appointed and they were given two months' salaries in advance." [1]

Another remarkable change is seen in the time of Mir Jumla (1660-63). From the pages of Bernier [2] we learn about the great power and prestige that this governor held during his life time. Bernier notes the remark of Aurangzeb at his death to his son, "You have lost your father, and I the greatest and the most dangerous friend I had." The author of *Ma'sirul Umara* says, "Mir Jumla was a great personality with princely marks. Among his contemporaries he had no equal in steadfastness, courage, devotion to work, far-sightedness, understanding, bravery and execution of work. None came up to his quality in the battle-field and in the conquest of territories." [3] We have also a record of

1. *Ibid*, p. 644.
2. *Travels in Hindustan*, Calcutta, reprint, 1904, pp. 150-55.
3. *Ma'sirul Umara*, ed. by Mirza Ashraf Ali, Calcutta, Vol. III. p. 555.

his strict justice. "When Mir Jumla Alamgiri was in residence at Khizrpur in Dacca, one of his servants called into his house a woman curd-seller and took from her a quantity of curd without payment, and ate it with his meal. The owner immediately afterwards lodged a complaint before the Nawab, whose practice it was to sit on the bastion facing the river and permit all plaintiffs, high and low alike, who wore no arms, to come to him without hindrance and say their say. The governor summoned the accused, who denied the charge. He was given an emetic and the curd came out of him with the vomitted food. The Nawab ordered the offender's belly to be slashed and exposed his body on the field of Khizrpur as a warning to others. This act of justice struck such terror that no one durst rob even a straw." [1]

The basis of Mir Jumla's economic system in Bengal was monopoly. "As Governor of Bengal he endeavoured to become the sole stockist of all articles of necessity and then sell them at fanciful prices. About 1660, Mir Jumla offered to supply the English factors every year as much salt as they would require. In the opinion of the Madras factors he did so for his personal profit."[2]

In Bengal Mir Jumla will be ever remembered for his victory over Shah Shuja, conquest of Assam, and the revenue arrangement. Dacca still has some memorials of his time. The two bridges *Pagla Pul* (still in a ruined condition) and *Tongi bridge* (now renovated), the famous Mymensingh Road and some of the water forts, like the Idrakpur fort at Munshiganj, recall his name. He also built another fort at Daudkandi,[3] but it is completely gone

1. J. N. Sarkar, *Bengal Nawabs*, Calcutta, 1952, p. 2.
2. Jagdish Narayan Sarkar, *The Life of Mir Jumla*, Calcutta, 1951,p. 216.
3. Rahman Ali Talish, *Tawarikh-i-Dhaka*, pp. 56-67.

now. Such a great warrior and builder breathed his last near Khizirpur while he was returning from his Assam campaign. Mr. S. M. Taifoor [1] believes that he was buried in Khizirpur at a place called Khanpur, named after *Khankhana*, but Mr. Rahman Ali Taish [2] speaks of his dead body being carried to Isfahan. Shihabuddin Talish notes that the Emperor ordered his dead body to be carried from Khizirpur to the Imperial Court.[3]

The greatest governor of Dacca was Amirul Umara Shaista Khan, who ruled in Bengal from 1662-77 and 1679-89. He was the son of Asaf Khan, the grand Vazir of the Mughal emperor and nephew of Nur Jahan and maternal uncle of Aurangzeb. He came to Bengal at a ripe old age but has left a permanent impress of his personality in the province as well as in the city of Dacca. Soon after his arrival he built up the Mughal *Nawwara* and collected war boats to crush the power of the Feringi pirates and overthrow the Mughs from the city of Chittagong. We get a glimpse of Shaista Khan at work in the diary of William Hedges. On the 29th October 1682 he met the Nawab and wrote, "At 9 in ye morning I went to wait on the Navob, who after ¼ hour's attendance, sent officers to bring me into his presence, being sat under a large canopy of state made of crimson velvet, richly embroidered with gold and silver, and deep gold and silver fringes, supported by four bamboos plated over with gold. I was directed by the Emir Tusuck, or Master of the Ceremonies, to sit over against the Navob, nearer the canopy than his Duan or any other person. At my first entrance the Navob was very busy in dispatching and vesting

1. *Glimpses*, p. 76.
2. *Tawarikh-i-Dhaka*, p. 56.
3. Jagdish Narayan Sarkar, *Op. Cit.* p. 274.

divers principal officers sent with all possible diligence with recruits for their army lately overthrown in Asham and Silhet, two large plentiful countries 8 days' journey from this city............Amongst the rest I saw a Portuguese who was to be commander of 5 or 600 of his countrymen. This hurry of business continued ¾ of an hour. When it was done the Navob called my Vekeel, James Price, and bid him tell me I was welcome into this country; continuing his discourse and demanding his questions of me for ¾ of an hour longer, as, how long I had been at sea, and how many in this country? Whether I was one of the Company?—which he seemed very inquisitive to know, having twice asked about it, —and to be informed of my quality; highly commending the Company for sending a person of credit to be their Agent............When he gave me leave to depart (according to their customs) he rose up, and going away stood still, and told me I should go first out of his Presence, which (I am informed) is greater kindness than he has ever shewn before to any Christian."[1]

Sir Jadunath Sarkar[2] enumerates the "good deeds" of Shaista Khan: "His exertions for conquering the province and fort of Chatgaon: the suppression of the pirates, and the consequent relief of the people of Bengal. Every day he held an open *darbar* for administering justice, and quickly redressed wrongs. He regarded this as his most important duty. He ordered that in the parganahs of his own jagir everything collected by the revenue officers above the fixed revenue should be refunded to the ryots. The former governors of Bengal used to make monopolies (*ijara*) of all articles of food and clothing and (many) other things, and then sell them at fanciful rates which the helpless people had to pay. Shaista Khan restored absolute

1. Henry Yule, *The Diary of William Hedges*, Vol. I, pp. 43-44.
2. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1906, pp. 253-67.

freedom of buying and selling. Whenever ships brought elephants and other (animals) to the ports of the province, the men of the Subahdar used to attach (*qura*) them and take whatever they selected at prices of their own liking. Shaista Khan forbade it. His abolition of the collection of *Zakat* (i. e. one fortieth of the income) from merchants and travellers, and of custom (*hasil*) from artificers, tradesmen and new-comers (*khush-nashin*), Hindus and Musalmans alike......... The courtiers used daily to present to the Nawab many needy persons, and he made them happy with gifts of money. When he set out on a ride or dismounted at a stage or took a walk, and also on the day of *'Id* and other holy days, in addition to (supporting) the established almshouses, he used to invite the populace and feed vast numbers to satiety at the tables he spread. His profuse charity so thoroughly removed poverty and need from Bengal that few hired labourers of workmen could be had (for money) to do any work............ Every year he used to send to all the provinces vast sums for the benefit of the faqirs, orphans, and motherless children, and thus laid in *viaticum* for his last journey."

This high praise of Shaista Khan is based on the account of Shihabuddin Talish. The same note is given in the *Riyaz-us-Salatin*. No wonder, therefore, that the fame[1] of Shaista Khan spread throughout Bengal and preserved even after his death. The people of Dacca have a great respect for him. The common people attribute to him all the important monuments of Dacca and have coined after his name a terminology—Shaistakhani style of architecture —for the Mughal style that became current in Dacca. Tradition attributes to him number of daughters. But we

1. See above, p. 48.

learn from his *vasiat-nama* [1] (a document registered before his death) that he had seven sons and five daughters, two of the daughters, Iran Dukht alias Bibi Pari and Turan Dukht alias Bibi Biban, were present in Dacca. The second daughter, according to this document, was lying buried near the Lakhya at Khizirpur.[2] From the same document we learn that one of the sons of Shaista Khan was Khuda Bande Khan alias Mirza Bengali, whose descendants are traceable right down till today in Dacca. Shaista Khan's name is also preserved in Shaista-ganj, a place near Chandpur, and Shaista-bad another place near Barisal.

Other Nobles : Among the other nobles the Iranians occupied a prominent place in Dacca. The Shiahs had a special favour at the hands of Shah Shuja for their learning and cultured habits. Even later in the time of Mir Jumla, who was himself an Iranian immigrant and still later, when the *Nizamat* was shifted to Murshidabad, the Shiahs held a very high place in the life of the city. They were not only scholars and high officers but also businessmen. The names [3] of a few of them are preserved in *Subah-i-Sadeq*, a work dedicated to Shah Shuja in 1639. In the first group we have the names of four brothers—Aqa Muhammad Zaman Tihrani, who had under his control the government of the *Sarkar* of Sylhet, Allahyar Khan, the governor of Koch Hajo, Khudayar Khan, who died in Dacca, and Mirza Rahmanyar Khan, the governor of Khardar (South Orissa). One great literary figure at Dacca was Mir Alaul Mulk,

1. For the document see *Jadu* (a monthly Urdu magazine started in Dacca in January 1923 now defunct), Dacca, Vol. III, no. 2, Feb, 1925, pp. 12-24.
2. See chapter X for her tomb.
3. The selection is made from Dr. A. Halim's article 'An account of the celebrities of Bengal of the early years of Shah Jahan's reign given by Muhammad Sadiq' in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. I, pt. IV, 1953, pp. 338-56.

who later became a tutor to Shah Shuja and occupied a very exalted position at the latter's court. His works included the *Muhaddab*, a treatise on logic, *Anwarul Hidaya* on theology, and *Siratul Wasit*. His brother Mir Abul Muali "is accomplished to perfection", and excelled all his contemporaries in poetic talents. His writings included a commentary on *Surah-i-Ikhlas*, a treatise on justice, an anthology of his poems and a memoir of his brother. We hear of Mirza Baqar, a distinguished Syed from holy Mashhad, who had the pen-name of *Hasil*. "He was famed for the firmness of his decisions, his courage and refinement of tastes." A great *Qazi* of Bengal was Maulana Muhammad Yazdi of Lahore, a vastly learned man of his time. Another celebrated family of Jahangirnagar belonged to Mirza Muhammad Husain Husaini Mashhadi, who came from Khurasan. He was a noble of Syed descent. Khwaja Saiduddin Muhammad Mashhadi was a poet of some repute. His father Haji Ghiyah is described as the "richest man in Bengal. He was the president (*Rais*) of the merchant community." We also read of Muhammad Husain Maneri Ghaffari Qazwini, "one of the best calligraphists of his age," who was also a poet and protege of prince Parwiz, Maulana Nadim Jilani with the pen-name of *Diyai*, a good poet of the time, Ahmad Beg Isfahani, a poet-friend of the author, and Muhammad Qasim Kashmiri, a *Sufi*. At the end Dr. Halim concludes, "That most of the officers and celebrated men were foreigners, who or whose fathers or grandfathers hailed from Kashan, Mashhad, Tihran, Badakhshan, Mazandaran, Gilan etc., and that most of them were Shiahs. The situation was not the same in the reign of Akbar or even in the early years of Jahangir's reign. And if one factor contributing to it is to be preferred to all the rest, it is in the writer's opinion, the influence of I'timad-ud-dawlah and members of his family, and the nepotism of Nurjahan and Asaf Khan. That the influence

of foreigners in over-whelming number during the reigns of Jahangir and Shahjahan contributed in the writer's views to a polish and grace in art and concentration on decoration in that realm of architecture. That prince Shuja lived in the environment of Shiah officers and Shiah divines, had married one after another two Shiah wives, had Shiah lady for his mother—these factors lend support to the view that he was none else than a Shiah by profession and strengthens the tradition prevalent at Dacca that Shuja brought with him three hundred Shiah nobles whom he settled in different parts of the country. That considering the names and the number of learned men and the fact that even the soldiers were renowned poets and calligraphists, it may be presumed that Bengal too did not lag behind the other provinces, under the Mughals, Shahjahan particularly, in the cultivation of letters and improvement of arts, and the information given strengthens the view that the reign of Shahjahan was undoubtedly the climax of the Mughal administration."

CHAPTER V

MUGHAL LIFE

Dacca through Mughal Eye : Today we look at the city of Dacca from our westernised angle and contrast the old small houses jumbled along the petty lanes and streets with the Europeanised, or Americanised, mansions laid out in the newly-developed areas with broad roads for motor cars. But in order to have a peep into the Mughal Dacca we have to forget the vehicular traffic altogether[1] and along with it do away with the modern metalled roads. Quite naturally we do not hear of any name of roads at that time. The old Nawabpur Road and Islampur Road are new names, and they are not found in the map of 1859 (see map no. 4). The practice of naming the roads started long after the foundation of the Dacca Municipality in 1864. In the old city we had names of only *mahallas* (localities), like Nawabpura, Islampura etc., and in recent years these names have been transferred to those of the roads when the idea of new road pattern was given by the British. The Dacca of the Mughals was broadly divided into two parts—the closed localities of residential houses and bazars, and the pleasure gardens with villas of noblemen within. The names of localities[2] are all preserved in the map of 1859. Even the Europeans, when they settled here, adopted the local system, and we have preserved Farasganj (correctly Franceganj after the French) and Armanitola (named after

1. Taylor writes, "Wheel conveyances are unknown in the country, and the number of carts in the city probably does not amount to more than twelve. Mr. Douglas, the collector in 1790, mentions that hackeries were introduced into Dacca by a corps that arrived in the city about that time."—*Topography of Dacca*, p. 119.
2. Some of them are given in chapter I.

the Armenians). These localities were connected by streets and lanes, for the first time paved with brick during the viceroyalty of prince Muhammad Azam[1] (1678-79). They were meant for travellers on foot, horseback or elephant (see below). However, the general means of conveyance in Bengal was boat, and because of this necessity we read of several channels through the city. The horses of the Mughals demanded streets and along with them bridges over the channels, erected in such a way that boats could pass underneath. Hence we find Dacca a city of bridges,[2] the bridges being of camber type. Today some of these bridges and channels have disappeared, but the old name, such as Chand Khan ka Pul, survives in that of the locality. Similarly the names of the *mahallas* no longer indicate the same idea which led to their origin. We have, for example, the names of Patua-toli (where work on *Patu* cloth was done), Kasai-toli (where *Kasai*, i. e. butchers lived), Kayath-toli (where kayath or Kayastha lived), Mughal-toli (where the Mughals lived), Kashmiri-tola (where Kashmiris lived), Churi-hatta (market for bangles), Sanchipandarp (correctly Sanchi-pan-dariba—a market for selling *sanchi* betel leaf), Masandi (correctly Maveshi-mandi, cattle-market), Dhan-mandi (paddy market) and many others. We have again Bechram-dewri, Aqa Sadeq Dewri, Ali Naqi Dewri, Amanat Khan Dewri etc. Here *Dewri* means a palatial building of the person named before it and its vicinity developed into a locality. Sometimes *Dewri* is replaced, and we get Dudu Mian Dalan. A group of the Mughal grandees lived in Umara-pura, later came to be known as Nawabpura, near which stood Nawab Katra, Nawab Dalan (where at present Dacca Museum and Curzon Hall are situated) and Nawab Dighi (the present tank between Dacca and Fazlul Huq

1. See above p. 47.
2. See above p. 5 for some of the names.

Halls). We have again British period names like Purana Paltan, Naya Paltan, Captain Bazar, Top Khana, Plassey Barracks etc. We need not enumerate the names of various *bazars*, *Katras* and *Nagars* (here meaning locality)—all of them now await the insight of the sociologists to unravel the old associations of Dacca.

The second part of Dacca appertains to Mughal gardens, now completely lost. But the surviving names recall the old fondness of the Mughals for such gardens, so much praised by Babar, the first Mughal emperor of Delhi, in his *Memoirs*. Places like Hazari-bagh, Qazir bagh, Lalbagh (later a fort was built at this place), Bagh Chand Khan, Bagh Hosainuddin, Bagh Musa Khan, Aram Bagh, Momin Bagh, Rajar Bagh and Mali Bagh have now been occupied by residential houses. Later we get the names of Shanti-bagh, Svamibagh etc. The famous Bagh-i-Badshahi, which included *mahalla Chishtian*, was most probably founded by the first Mughal governor of Dacca, Islam Khan Chishti himself. It is in this *mahalla* that the first resting place of Islam Khan, modern *dargah of Chishti Behishti* (meaning heavenly Chishti), in the present High Court compound, is situated. This *bagh* is now parcelled into Ramna Green Park, High Court, Race Course, and a part which still bears the name of Shah Bagh—this last area was again developed into a garden in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by the present Dacca Nawab family.[1] The modern gate pillars (originally called Mymensingh Gate) near the Curzon Hall, that mark the beginning of Shahbagh Avenue on this side, were originally built in 1825,[2] when the race course was laid. Though the old gardens have now gone, they have perhaps left

1. For the history of this family see next chapter.
2. The construction of these pillars is completely European. They cannot be attributed to the Mughals, as is supposed by Mr. Taifoor, see his *Glimpses*, p. 189.

their charm in the surviving greenery and luscious trees of Dacca. It is in these groves and gardens that the Mughals spent their time eating and drinking[1] during leisure hours.

Mughals on the march : In Bengal the Mughals, who were habituated to dry land, learnt to build *nawwara* (navy) in order to hold the province. The first great *Mir-i-Bahar* (chief of the navy), who accompanied Islam Khan, was Mirza Ihtimam Khan, the father of Mirza Nathan. Both father and son were responsible for developing the Mughal navy. This naval establishment was meant to suit the rivers of Bengal but it was no match to the European sea-going vessels. Mirza Nathan tells us about the *Katari*, *maniki* and *bathila* boats used for big cannons and also for making floating bridges.[2] We also read of *kusas*, *jaliya*, *dhura*, *sundara*, *bajra* and *khelna* boats, seven hundred of them were put forth by Musa Khan to defend himself.[3] Other war boats are of the class of *piara*, *ghurab*, *machua*,[4] *mand*, *bachari* and *dingi*.[5] Some of these boats like the *khelna* and *dingi* were often used for moving about in the river. These war boats had names like *Khudadia*, *Jaltarang*[6] and *Nadula*.[7] The boat of Islam Khan bore the special name of *Chandni*, and also called *Fath-i-Dariya*.[8] It is likely that Chandnighat, which in this period was a special landing place for the Mughal governors,[9] was named after this boat. Such pleasure boats were covered "with a gold

1. *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, Vol. I, p. 276.
2. *Ibid*, p. 48.
3. *Ibid*, p. 56.
4. *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 488.
5. *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 141.
6. *Ibid*, p. 228.
7. *Ibid*, p. 8.
8. *Ibid*, p. 49.
9. For disembarking of Qasim Khan at this place see *Ibid*, p. 270.

embroidered canopy."[1] We also read of a special kind of house-boat, called *Mahalgiri-boat*, which lay in the river for family picnic[2] and could be moved in the river for pleasure trip.[3] The boat life was a new experience to the Mughals who dared not risk their lives in riverine pursuits. Their most delightful ride was on horse, which was the chief means of conveyance through the city streets.[4] We find Islam Khan himself going on horse to meet Ihtimam Khan and inspect the fleet.[5] But the most majestic ride was on the *howdah* of an elephant. This practice continued throughout the Mughal period. We find in the early part of the 19th century Nawab Nasrat Jang going on an elephant in a procession.[6] For more comfortable ride *Sukhpals* (palanquins) were used. They were carried by *kahars*.[7] Another kind was called *larakcha*, which was "a kind of palanquin made of green bamboos and carried by men on shoulders like a *Duli* (litter)."[8] But the last was used mostly by the ladies who put on their veils[9] when they went out.

Position of Ladies : The veil was more an honour than a limitation of rights, and this was practised mostly by the ladies of rank. Such ladies had maids and slaves to serve them, as we find Mirza Nathan presenting some to his sister after capturing them on "an expedition to the hills."[10] Other customs can be gleaned from the

1. *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, Vol. I, p. 48.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 147, 218 and 277.
3. See *ibid*, p. 216 for Islam Khan's boat.
4. *Ibid*, p. 271.
5. *Ibid*, p. 76.
6. In a painting preserved in the Dacca Museum.
7. *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, Vol. II, pp. 560-63.
8. *Ibid*, p. 684.
9. *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 277.
10. *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 668.

following reception given in honour of Mirza Nathan's sister and her sons in Bengal. "Abdul Malik Seth, who was the Shiqdar (revenue administrator) of fourteen parganas, went first of all to receive them and presented a *peshkash* of Rs. 1,000 to the Mirza's sister on his own behalf as well as on behalf of the Zamindars of the parganas. Another sum of Rs. 4,000 which was arranged for the expenses of their journey, was paid to them and they were sent to Jahangirnagar. When they arrived at Jahangirnagar *alias* Dhaka, the Khan Fath-jang took the sister of the Mirza who was considered as a foster child by Ruqaiya Sultan Begum, wife of Ibrahim Khan, with great respect to his residence, and he extended to her a befitting hospitality. Many of the rare articles of Bengal were presented to them and they were kept at Jahangirnagar for two months in order to remove the fatigue of the long journey which they had undergone."[1] When "the Mirza received the news of the arrival of his sister......he reached Chandankuth within a day and a night, and *obtained the honour of kissing the feet of his elder sister* who occupied the place of his mother. After staying there for three days and nights he came back to Sualkuchi safely on the seventh day. Here, from the bank of the river where they were disembarking, from the boats upto the *Masnad* (i. e. the exalted seat of the lady) *carpets were laid at three places.* The sister was taken to the residence arranged for her stay and her sons were taken to the places meant for them. A befitting hospitality was extended to them for a week and every day they were presented with rare gifts."[2] In contradistinction to the high esteem for their own mothers and sisters we find the Mughals claiming the daughters of the defeated rulers for marriage,[3] a practice which goes

1. *Ibid*, pp. 666-67.
2. *Ibid*, p. 668.
3. *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 240.

back to ancient time in India. Accordingly the Assamese ruler's daughter was taken and later married to prince Muhammad Azam.[1] We have sometimes a revolting sense of disdain at such demands. We read that Husain Khan "killed all his wives and daughters and those of his brother"[2] to be free from care. In a similar precarious situation Mirza Nathan himself adopted the same position. He writes : "The Mirza sent away some of his women in the company of two officers on an elephant which he could procure. But as the whole of the imperial artillery was loaded on the other elephants, no elephant was left for the servants (*khidmatgaran*) of the Mahal. He ordered that they should perform *jawhar*. Thus about fifty to eighty persons of the Mirza's mahal performed *jawhar*, and many of the men of the army, who thought that they would lose their honour, also performed *jawhar*."[3]

Mughal Customs : The Mughals learnt the practice of *jawhar* probably from the Rajputs. Here in Bengal we find them using *pan* (betel leaf) for various purposes. It was a common practice to offer *pan* to a guest on his arrival,[4] but more frequently *pan* was an invariable item along with "trayfuls of sweet scents"[5] when presents were given to honourable guests. It was also given at the time of departure, or sometimes "to pacify" the disgruntled. Sometimes *pan* served as guarantees for holding fast to a promise.[6] Accordingly when Islam Khan charged Musa Khan for the revolt of Husain Khan, Musa Khan "took a *dao* (big knife) and a piece of *pan* (betel leaf) from Islam

1. See above p. 60
2. *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, Vol. I, p. 141.
3. *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 599
4. *Ibid*, p. 461
5. *Ibid*, p. 502.
6. *Ibid*, p. 571.

Khan, and sent two hundred war-boats"[1] to capture Husain Khan. Finally when Husain Khan was captured, he was asked to give his daughter or his brother's daughter in marriage to the son of Islam Quli and distribute *pan* with his own hand.[2] At the time of taking oath "every Muslim should place his hand on the Qur'an and every Hindu on the *Shalgram*."[3] The battle-cry used by the Mughals was either *Allah-u-Akbar* (God, the Great) or *Ya Mu'yin*[4] (O, the Helper). At the time of succession the turban and sword played an important role. They passed on from the deceased to the successor, as was done after the death of Khwaja Usman.[5] The turban, along with other presents, plays a ceremonial part, as we find emperor Jahangir investing Ibrahim Khan with the governorship of Bihar : "He was honoured with the title of Ibrahim Khan. He was presented with a special robe of honour along with a horse, a bejewelled sword, a standard, a kettle-drum, which were the necessary requisites for this great office. At the time of farewell he was also honoured *with the gift of a special turban, belonging to the Qibla* (*i. e. the Emperor*) of the spiritual and temporal domains, the shadow of the Lord of the Universe, along with a jewelled *Jigha* (an ornament worn in the turban) in which very costly pearls were studded by skilful artisans. It was placed on his head by the blessed hands of His Majesty and a special riding elephant which was kept ready was presented to him.

1. *Ibid*, Vol. I, pp. 141-42.
2. *Ibid*, p. 140.
3. *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 477.
4. *Ibid*, p. 491.
5. *Ibid*, Vol. I, pp. 193-94.

In the midst of a public audience, in presence of His Majesty, the fortunate Khan was ordered to ride on the elephant in the same way as the devoted sons are granted the honour of this distinction."[1] We also find great respect paid to the Imperial *Farmans* and presents sent by the emperor. Mirza Nathan describes : "Islam Khan rode out on horse-back in the company of Iftikhar Khan and Mirza Nathan and proceeded to receive the royal Farmans and presents brought by Abdul Wahhab. He then sent Tahmas Quli to Ihtimam Khan with this message :—'Imperial Farman and presents have also been sent for you. Although you are annoyed with us, I hope you will not disdain to observe the rites of obeisance due to the Emperor, and come to receive them.' Ihtimam Khan with great submissiveness came to the place where Abdul Wahhab was camping with the Farmans and presents. He arrived immediately after the arrival of Islam Khan. All the officers honoured themselves by making their obeisance. First of all Islam Khan made his obeisance. For him were sent a Farman, a special robe of honour with a fur garment, a pair of 'Iraqi and Turkish horses, a gun studded with pearls, a pair of *Chita* (panther), and five pairs of Arabian horses. For every article he paid his respects and prostrations of gratitude to the Eternal and thus obtained the happiness of both the worlds. After him Mu'taqid Khan received a Farman and a robe of honour ;............and Mirza Nathan received special portrait of his Majesty. If any of the servants is included among the Emperor's special disciples he is favoured with a portrait adorned with a genealogical tree. Therefore, on account of many devoted services of Mirza Nathan which were frequently reported to His Majesty and the aforesaid dream about the Emperor which had been narrated in the body of this book, he was included in the

1. *Ibid*, p. 263.

circle of his disciples. Now a special portrait was sent with Abdul Wahhab. Nathan placed it on his head and honoured himself by observing the formalities of obeisance and prostrations of gratitude."[1]

The Mughals were very particular about the auspicious moments of time. Even the governor-designate Qasim Khan, when coming to Dacca to join his duties, stopped at Jatrapur and asked "the astrologers to find out an auspicious hour for making his entry into the delightful city of Jahangirnagar. The far-sighted astrologers made an observation of the heavenly bodies and found out an auspicious hour and opined that if the entry was made at that particular time, it would be favourable. They said :—'It would be best to enter the city of Jahangirnagar on this very night of the 27th of Rabi-ul-Awwal when five *gharis* still remained of the last part of the night. If this hour passes away then the next auspicious hour will be far away."[2] The Mughals had a peculiar belief in witchcraft and magical spell. At one place we find a *Zunnardar*[3] (possessor of sacred thread—Brahmin) was sent for to drive away its effects, and at another place[4] a Muslim *Darwesh* Mian Aqil Muhammad of Dacca was approached for the same purpose. Ordinarily we hear of *Hakims*[5] and *Kavirajas*[6] diagnosing the diseases. On the death of a near and dear one weeping was the common habit. At the death of his father "Mirza Nathan also began to weep by rending his collars."[7] We get some details about the death ceremony : "Muhammad Murad,

1. *Ibid*, pp. 73-74.
2. *Ibid*, p. 270.
3. *Ibid*, p. 274.
4. *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 672.
5. For Hakim Qudsi see *ibid*, Vol. I, p. 17.
6. *Ibid*, p. 202.
7. *Ibid*, p. 203,

Diwan of Ihtimam Khan carried his body to the river Pankiya with great honour and full observation of religious rites. There he placed the coffin of the Khan on a very swift boat and started for Qadam Rasul. He reached Qadam Rasul within six *pahars* and deposited with necessary preparations the coffin of the Khan on a mound (*damdamah*) at Qadam Rasul with great pomp and grandeur. Ihtimam Khan, during his life time used to say to his son, 'If I happen to die in this country keep my coffin in safe custody and then take it to the garden of my palace situated near Sirhind and bury it there. Dedicate to it some income for the relief of the poor."[1]

Mirza Nathan celebrated the six-monthly feast of his late father "which was attended by all the Khans. Islam Khan who could not attend on that day due to illness, came on the next day to the house of Mirza Nathan and offered many excuses. It was a great feast where various kinds of delicious food, drink, and fruits were served. Every reciter of the Qur'an was given a pair of valuable shawls and otto of roses was sprinkled in a right royal fashion."[2] The Mirza gives the detail of the grand feast : "He invited all the noted officers besides the Subahdar, the Diwan, the Bakhshi, the Qazi and the Mir'Adl. All the Khans came to the house of Mirza Nathan. In the mean time, as it was Friday, Islam Khan came to the congregational prayer. It was ordered by him that those officers who would be absent from the prayer would be fined. Therefore, the comrades wanted to leave. Mirza Nathan said, 'If you are thinking of the fine, then I hold myself responsible for it.' They therefore stayed on. But as an imperial Farman sent to Islam Khan with the son of Baz

1. *Ibid*, pp. 203-4.
2. *Ibid*, p. 213.

Bahadur Qalmaq had arrived, the aforesaid Khan went out on a boat to receive it............(When the Khan returned) the comrades who were heavily drunk did not come near Islam Khan and they dispersed in every direction through the corner of the houses of Mirza Nathan. The servants of the Mirza poured on their dress rose water and aroma of orange flowers and sprinkled scents of ambergris in the air in such a way that the room which was stinking with the smell of wine assumed the fragrance of paradise......... This entertainment went on for seven days and nights with great festivities. It was such a convivial meeting that it deserved to be noted in the histories of the world."[1]

Other festivities : Such festive occasions were commonly observed by the Mughals. Mirza Nathan describes the Ramzan festivities during the camp life : "From the beginning of the month till its last day, every body, small or great, used to visit the camp of his friends every day. It became the usual practice that every day all people would spend their time in the camp of one of those noble friends by turns. Accordingly on the night of the last day it was the turn of Mubariz Khan's banquet. All people spent their time in his place. At the end of the day when the new moon was seen at candle light, the imperial trumpet was blown and all the fire-arms of the artillery were discharged simultaneously."[2] On the day of Id celebration at Tupia "Nathan went to his illustrious father Ihtimam Khan in order to communicate this news and to offer him greetings for the Id. He then went to Shaja't Khan in the company of his father, and both of them offered their greetings to him. Shaja't Khan held a social entertainment in order to receive his friends on this

1. *Ibid*, pp. 215-17.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 109-10.

day of the festival."[1] In another place Nathan gives more details : "When the day of the festival of sacrifice (*Id-i-Qurban*) came, in the morning all the officers went to the place of prayer. The preacher was instructed to read the surmon in such a way, that when he would come to the commendation of His Majesty the Caliph, the Shadow of God, Jahangir Badshah, he should read "Nuruddin Muhammad Jahangir Badshah and Abul Muzaffar Shahjahan Badshah Ghazi Bin Nuruddin Muhammad Jahangir Badshah" and then finish the sermon by offering the *Fatiha* (benedictory prayer) for the long life of His Royal Highness. In fine the preacher finished the sermon in that way. At the time when the name of His Royal Highness (Shahjahan) was uttered, in spite of the fact this preacher had been given a robe of honour by each of the Emperors, I threw my dress of honour embroidered with pure gold on the shoulder of the preacher, and *regazi* (two-anna, four-anna and eight-anna pieces) of Rs. 500/ were scattered as a sacrifice before the preacher. Many of the needy people removed their difficulties of livelihood by means of this and they became happy. Voices of greetings reached the sky. After returning home, I performed the Qurbani (sacrifice of animals). A great banquet was held throughout the whole day and night with the pleasant entertainments of beautiful singers and dancers of lovely grace and story-tellers of pleasant disposition. Many of the workers of the factories were favoured with gifts."[2] Such merry-making parties were quite frequent. We read after the victory over Pratapaditya "the imperial officers, who arrived from different stations, began to stay there by constructing beautiful houses and abodes for their residence. Mirza Nathan in particular got ready an extremely grand site and

1. *Ibid*, p. 170.
2. *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 742.

constructed nice Bungalows there at a cost of Rs. 1,500 each. He brought the villagers of Jessore who fled from their homes to settle here, and he constructed a three-storied mansion with the *supari* trees (areca-nut trees) which became an object of envy to the buildings of the highest heaven. Therefore all the nobles used to visit that mansion and they always held special entertainments. Every day musicians and singers of lovely face and sweet voice, and *Hafizes* (reciters of the Qur'an) and men of intellect used to spend their time in it."[1] After another victory "Mirza Nathan held a big banquet and extended his invitation to all people, small and great............After the dinner and the distribution of the otto of roses when the whole day was passed in the enjoyment of the music of the melodious singers and in listening to the *Hafizes* of sweet voice, the the Mirza presented one horse to each of the men......"[2] The encouragement to the soldiers were also given "by distributing among them copper coins, rice, *bhang* (Indian hemp) and opium."[3] Finally we note the birth of a son to Mirza Nathan who went to his father "and performed the formalities of congratulations, as it is obligatory to take proper care of children. Ihtimam Khan sent the news to Shaja't Khan. Shaja't Khan, due to his extreme love for Mirza Nathan, sent the whole of his artillery-men to the camp of Ihtimam Khan and ordered them to spend the whole day and night in the enjoyment of the celebration of this happy occasion. Ihtimam Khan, highly pleased at this, ordered to bring two of his strong elephants and made them fight outside the fort of Taraf. Many of their comrades came to congratulate the father and son and these two elephants fought till candle-light twisting their

1. *Ibid*, Vol I, p. 138.
2. *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 476.
3. *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 62.

trunks and knocking against each other's head. After that they were separated and all the comrades returned to their camp."[1]

Festival of the Bera : This is a festival of the boat, which, in fact, takes its origin from the local custom, but the Mughals appear to have adopted it for their *nawwara*. It is celebrated on the last Thursday of the month of Bhadra (August-September) but the Muslims transferred the time to the last Thursday of the Muslim year. Dr. Wise describes, "The Bera, usually made of paper, ornamented with tinsel, has a prow resembling a female falcon with the crest and breast of a peacock, in imitation of the figure head on the bow of the Mor-Pankhi pleasure boat. The effigee placed on a raft of plantain stems is set afloat at sunset, and with its flickering lights gives a picturesque aspect to the dark and flooded stream. At Murshidabad, where the festival was first kept by Sirajuddaulah, the Bagarathi is illuminated with hundreds of rafts floating with the stream, while the banks are crowded by the inhabitants."[2] This festival is associated locally with the name of Khwaja Khizir who "is believed at the present day to reside in the sea and rivers of India, protecting many from ship-wreck, and to be only visible to those who accompany a forty days' watch on the banks of a river."[2]

Muharram Celebration : We have earlier described *Id* celebration as given in the pages of the *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*. Another great festival that has always attracted large section of the Muslim populace is the *Muharram*,

1. *Ibid*, pp. 168-69.
2. James Wise, *Notes on the Races, Castes and trades of Eastern* Bengal, London, 1883, p. 12.
3. *Ibid*, p. 12.

celebrated during the first ten days of the month of Muharram in commemoration of the martyrdom of Hasan and Husain, the two sons of Hazrat Ali. This celebration had a special attraction in Dacca as the city had a large number of Shiah population, but here it is participated both by the Shiahs and Sunnis, and in the past even by the Hindus and the Christians. The Karbala tragedy made a special appeal to the sentiment of the common people, and we find, in Bengali, works like *Maktul Husain* and many other *marsiya* songs obtaining great popularity.

The centre of *Muharram* celebration is known as *Imambara* or *Husaini Dalan*, and the kernel of the celebration consists of the annual mass mourning (*matam*) for the sad death of the beloved sons of Hazrat Ali. The local ceremony tries to express the *matam* with all the acceleration of age-old customs incorporating some of the features of the Karbala tragedy and other local details borrowed from the usual festivities observed in Dacca. The celebration appears to be a peculiar amalgam of *matam* and of festivities that crowds of people come to see one or the other. Such a celebration is a needed diversion to win away the Muslims from the emotional celebrations of *Durga Puja* and *Janmashtami Puja* held by the Hindus. The *Muharram* mainly divides itself into three parts—the first is the reading of *marsiya* (mourning songs) in Husaini Dalan, the second is the taking out, in procession, of the symbolic tomb, called *Ta'ziya*, along with other emblems, and third is the distribution of *Sharbat* (sweet water) and *Khichra* (a preparation of rice mixed with gram) in memory of the scarcity of drink and food on the day of the Karbala tragedy.

We do not know how far back in history this type of celebration can be traced in Dacca. But that it was observed

in some form from a very long time, is clear from the existence of a number of Husaini Dalans in Dacca. The oldest datable *Imambara* is in the *mahalla of Bibi ka Rauza* in Farasganj, which was originally built by Amir Khan in 1011 A. H./A.D· 1600, and later repaired by R. M. Dosanji in 1861. But the most important centre in Dacca today is the famous Husaini Dalan,[1] just a little way off from Nazimuddin Road, which is said to have been built in 1052 A. H./A.D. 1642 by Mir Murad, an officer of the Mughal navy. Still older centre (but no longer traceable) was known as *Purana Husaini Dalan* (marked as such in map no. 4), which stood close to Dhakeswari temple. Another *Imambara* was known after Mir Ya'qub, the fifth was located in a house at Phulbaria near present Dacca Railway station, the sixth was at Champa-toli, now known as Chota Katra, and the seventh was at Mirza Muqim Katra (now known as Maulvi Bazar). There have been many other smaller centres that are remembered in local tradition. Unfortunately no contemporary account of the *Muharram* celebration in Dacca during the Mughal period is available. However, we give the following day-to-day description (though all the details may not be true of the Mughal period) based on a painting of Muharram procession of the early part of the last century, done by Alam Musawwar now preserved in the Dacca Museum as well as on a detailed account given by Mr. Hakim Ahsan.[2]

The *Muharram* ceremony starts immediately after seeing the moon of the month of Muharram. From this very night the *naubah* (music) is played in the *naubah-khana* (the main gateway of Husaini Dalan). The *majlis* (mourning

1. See chapter VIII for description.
2. *Jadu* (a defunct Urdu monthly Journal), Dacca, Vol. I, no. 8, August, 1923, pp. 3-25.

parties) also start from this moment. On the first three days, along with the *majlis* and *naubah*, candles are lighted in the night in the small wall niches of Husaini Dalan. From the fourth day the ceremony assumes full swing. People crowd in the verandahs of Husaini Dalan to hear the *Bhatiyali marsiya* (the mourning songs in the *Bhatiyali tune* of Bengal). For the purpose of singing about twenty *mahallas* of the city divide themselves into *Hadi* and *Girwah*, broken up into two parties, the song being sung in the form of question and answer by the opposing parties. The composition is in both Urdu and Bengali, and the singing arouses enough emotion and spirit. The *Marsiya-Khwans* (the *marsiya* singers) come in groups headed by those who read *Salam*. They come with their own *nishan* (flag). In the Dacca Museum painting we find the processionists carrying such flags. These *nishans* are known as *Arani*. On the sixth and seventh days fire-works are also displayed in a spirit of competition by the different *mahalla* people. In the *marsiya* both the Sunnis and the Shiahs—the two important sects of the Muslims—participate. In Husaini Dalan the Shiahs occupy the northern half of the *Dalan*, where they have their *zarih mubarak* (symbolic tombs), *'Alam* (flag) and *minbar* (pulpit), and where they do *noha khwani* (reading of hymnal songs in praise of the martyrs) and *soz-khwani* (reading of mourning songs). These Shiah songs are popularly called *Rangin Marsiya*, probably because they were sung with sweet voice.

The fifth day of the *Muharram* in Dacca shows the *Bhishtas* (correctly *Bhishtis* meaning water-carrier) out in procession in the streets. They are all Sunnis of varying ages, ranging from four to seventy, and undertake to become *bhishta* in fulfilment of a *mannat* (vow to be completed after the fulfilment of a desire). They have a particular uniform—a green rough *lungi* covering the trousers

underneath forms the lower garment and the upper consists of a green shirt or *achkan* (long coat) with a turban[1] over the head supported by a multi-coloured string and a *kafni* (coffin-cloth round the neck), *baddhi* (single-string garland at the chest) and a shining golden wire worn, like a bracelet, round the wrist and, like a necklace, round the neck. They have a glass in one hand, a water-bottle at the side and a long decorated (sometimes with silver) stick in the other hand, and they walk bare foot.

On the sixth day all these *bhishtas* must come to Husaini Dalan, or at least send their sticks, which are placed scissorwise in the field. Below the sticks burns a candle, and it is here that sweets and other *niyaz* (blessed food) are distributed. Thousands crowd to get the blessings and receive the *niyaz*. The children, too, are brought and, when they receive the blessing, they put on the green dress like a *bhishta*, and go about in a procession abegging from their near and dear ones.

The seventh is the great day of *julus* (procession) when Husaini Dalan is well lighted. Thousands of persons throng to see the people mourning by beat of chests. On the eighth day ladies from villages come in great numbers and start their *jari* (*zari*) songs from the afternoon, and hence it is called *dupahriya matam* (afternoon mourning). At this time men leave Husaini Dalan. The approach of evening marks the start of a magnificent procession, called *Tug-gasht* (*Tug* in Turkish means a flag and *gasht* meaning wandering), from Husaini Dalan. It passes through the important streets of Bakhshi Bazar, Urdu Road, Begam Bazar and Diwan Bazar. The procession is in its full

1. More often the turban is missing.

colour at the Chauk when, with the approach of the night, variegated lights give an added charm to it. The procession moves in the following order. At the head are to be seen two to four *Akharas*[1] with men carrying afflorescent lights in mica glasses, followed by a group of men in uniform walking in twos or threes with *alam bardars* (flag-men). Then comes the elephant with *nishan.* In the past the elephants were larger in number and were decorated. The *nishans* bear the *Tughra* (floreate writing) of *Ya Fattah* (O conqueror) or *Ya 'Ali* (O 'Ali). Immediately behind the elephant are to seen caparisoned horses in a single row walking between *Asa bardars* (club-men) in full dress. The horses and the elephants also have the lighted mica glasses. Then comes the turn of music parties—first we have a local band playing a mourning tune, then a *naubah* on the horses, next is the group of instrumentalists and finally a *danka* (drum), which is an ancient symbol of a caravan march. We then witness the most important part of the procession, in which the main attraction is the *Bibi ka dola* (palanquin), two in number, covered by black cloth, and preceded by riders carrying *alams* in hands and two men on foot again with *alam* and band-players. On either side of the *dola* walk in solemn manner the *bhishtas* under their *Sardars* (leaders) who give a lead for *na'ra* (slogan). In the past the *dola* was carried on camels. Whenever this *dola* passes, the sight-seers all stand up to show their respect. Immediately behind the *dola* is to be seen a group of mourners, along with devotees of Husain in black or green, all carrying candles in hand. In this very group we can see the *Zul-Janah* (name of the horse of Husain),

1. *Akhara* is a typical club under the management of an *Ustad* (teacher), where young men come to learn exercises in stick-playing, swordsmanship, body-building etc. The men from such clubs join the procession with their weapons in order to show their spirit of sacrifice for the cause of Hazrat Husain.

which is the main object for mourning, closely followed by the *Duldul* (name of the horse of 'Ali), which has a blood-stained saddle and a *Zul-Fiqar* (name of 'Ali's sword), the saddle being pierced with an arrow. At the end comes an elephant with two drums slowly being beaten marking the close of the procession.

On the ninth day the celebration starts in the evening with the *alam* taken out from *Bibi ka Rauza* in procession followed by elephants and *bhishtas*. At eleven in the night people crowd in the Chauk to witness the display of the *Akharas*, some of whom come from the villages. The village *Akharas* play only with sticks but the city ones use swords, *daos* and other fire-weapons. The main event of the night starts at 3 in the morning with a procession called *Gahwara-gasht* slowly coming out from Husaini Dalan. The arrangement follows the order of *Tug-gasht* of the previous night with a few additions. Behind the *Zul-Janah* we notice today a *Pahar*, having a base of wooden planks with a *mihrab* above—all covered with paper—the sides of which are decorated with crossed swords and shields, the whole giving an appearance of *Aslah-khana* (armoury). Behind the *Pahar* is seen the *Ta'ziya*, an imitation of double-storied domed tomb in paper, having imitation graves of the heroes within, who died in Karbala. By about morning the procession goes back to Husaini Dalan.

On the 10th day, called *Ashura* and also *Manzil* (as today is the last day) a great fair is held in Azimpura. All the *Ta'ziyas* including *Zarih Mubarak* (symbolic tombs) are taken out from different *Imambaras* along with other emblems and brought in grave mourning to the *Karbala* beyond Azimpura, which is situated at Husainabad. Here the *Ta'ziyas* are left in the water, but the *alams* and symbolic tombs are carried back, covered with black cloth,

silently to Husaini Dalan. This brings to a close the Shiah ceremony. The Sunnis take out another big-size *Ta'ziya*, called *Bolta*[1] *gahwara*, from *Bibi ka Rauza* in the evening. This last ceremony represents the sympathy of the troopers of Yazid, who, out of fear, could not touch the blood-stained body of Hazrat Husain during the day, but in the cover of the night they are said to have taken the body for proper burial. Accordingly this *Bolta-gahwara* which is preceded by 3 or 4 persons carrying *nishan* and *sehra*, is carried swiftly through the old streets. On way the Muslims, Hindus and Armenians all pay their respects. We find at this time many people selling *Sehra Sunni* (correctly *Sehra Shirni*—packet of sweets) to be respectfully thrown over the *Ta'ziya*. This is carried direct towards the old *Idgah* (now in Dhanmandi residential area) and there left in the pond. With this ends the proper *Muharram* celebration, though we also have the practice of observing the *Tija* (i. e. the *Fatiha* ceremony on the third day).

1. The name *Bolta* (speaking) is derived from a practice in which a fasting man keeps himself praying at the *Sijdah* (postration on the ground in the Muslim way) since morning, and when he speaks out "hun", the *Ta'ziya* is taken out. This practice recalls the murder of Hazrat Husain when he was at prayer in this posture.

CHAPTER VI

DACCA UNDER THE BRITISH

(1765—1947)

Introduction : Dacca of the British was a slow-moving city deprived of its dynamic charm with the departure of the Mughals from the scene. The old *Naib Nizamat* still remained the centre of activity for sometime to come, but new changes and administrative reforms, gradual but certain, sat tight on Muslim hands, and poverty stole into their houses disintegrating the age-old families and driving many into the security of rural life. The dwindling of muslin trade and other economic factors reduced the Muslim nobility into mere tillers of the soil and, as Bishop Heber witnesses (see below), that red blood, which once fired ruling authority and soldierly courage, chilled behind the strain of the penury of the age. Yet the Mughal life in the city survived though in a decadent style. The Mughal customs and manners formed the bases of civility in the city. Though the old *Jagirs*, privileges and posts that the Muslims enjoyed slipped away from their hands, their habit of aristocracy and sense of high demeanour continued in them a spirit of extravagance[1] that further drove them into abysmal misery and frustration. New families, like the present Dacca Nawab family, rose up to replace the old and continue the aged traditionalism of the past but no new

1. Compare for example the description of Meer Ashraf Ali given by Bishop Heber in *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India*, London, 1828, Vol. I, pp. 154-56.

economic avenues opened to sprinkle the life-giving water into the dead channels of old. The rudimentary jacket of the new administration, no doubt, emerged with the new civil service, introduction of English education, new roads and communications and new European fashions and tastes, but the life in Dacca throughout the nineteenth century was a dull dreary hanger-on of the Mughal ghost. The Persian had now become a classical language, and the *Madrassah* and the spirit thereof still had the domineering influence in the Muslim homes. Those who counted in the Muslim society, spoke the Urdu language and moved with the rulers, and it is they who constituted the class of the *Sharif*.[1] Their eyes suddenly opened with the next turn in history in 1905 when the British created the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam and made Dacca its head-quarter. It was an unsought-for gift for which the Muslims were not prepared. Though Dacca gained in some respects, the Muslims failed to come up to the situation and strive to regenerate themselves and shake off their century-old lethargy and discomfiture. The only fruit of this first partition of Bengal was the awakening in the Muslim mind of the necessity of an All India Muslim political organisation to voice their sentiments. It took its shape in the establishment of the All India Muslim League[2] but before the League could strengthen its hands to carry out its programme, the first partition of Bengal foundered on the vehement mass opposition of the Hindu Bengalis. The gift was withdrawn by

1. See the trenchant remark of Tasadduq Ahmad in his presidential address to the first annual meeting of the *Muslim Sahitya Samaj* in *Shikha*, Vol I, 1927, p. 8.
2. The historical importance of this momentous decision has now been realised by the Government of Pakistan, and it is proposed to have a national monument to commemorate this event at the same site in Shahbagh area where the first meeting was held in December 1906.

the same hand which gave it, and Dacca went back to its old life. But the gift was not without any result. Dacca witnessed a rebirth of its spirit both materially as well as intellectually.[1] Politically the annulment of partition did not lead to any outburst of Muslim sentiment because the fervour of political consciousness had not yet dawned in the Muslim masses. However, the future development of a University at Dacca on the explicit support of the Muslims[2] and opposition of the Hindus, formulated on the basis of a residential university with separate Halls for Hindu and Muslim students, created a unique opportunity in Dacca pregnant with political developments of the thirtees and fortees of this century. In the first instance we find the creation of *Dacca Sahitya Parishad* with its Bengali Journal *Pratibha* started from 1921 for literary purposes almost wholly monopolised by the Hindus. For the Muslims it was necessary first of all to establish their identity. We find among them new tendencies taking root. From January 1923 a monthly Urdu journal by name *Jadu* started publication from Dacca, in which the important contributions were made by the members of the Dacca University. Still more important was the foundation, in 1925, of a *Muslim Sahitya Samaj*—a Muslim modernist movement—laid by Abul

1. Materially we find the building of a new town in Ramna, and intellectually we find the issue of the first newspapers in Dacca (for a brief period), *Al-Mashriq* in Urdu and *Eastern Bengal and Assam Era* in English (1906—12). At the same time we have several books on Dacca published—Bradley-Birt, *Romance of an Eastern Capital*; Sayid Aulad Hasan, *Notes on the Antiquities of Dacca*, 1912; Rahman Ali Taish, *Tawarikh-i-Dhaka*, 1910; Y. M. Roy, *Dhakar Itihas*, 1319 (B. S.); and the most important was the establishment of a monthly journal called *Dacca Review* (started in April 1911) in English and *Sammelan* in Bengali with articles from Hindus and Muslims—the only journal edited by a Hindu supporting the cause of "Eastern Bengal and Assam".
2. For long the Hindus of Calcutta called Dacca University as Makka University.

Husain, Qazi Abdul Wadud, Abdul Qadir and others. They were men of very liberal attitude and pleaded for Hindu-Muslim unity (a reflection of the contemporary Khilafat movement in the sub-continent), but at the same time maintaining their Muslim identity. They had their annual journal, called *Shikha* (flame), in which they propagated for Bengali and for doing away with the age-old traditionalism. In a word they were for *Mukta-buddhi* (free mind), though their declared aim was "love of truth and cultivation of literature" (সত্য প্রীতি ও সাহিত্য চর্চ্চা). The journal could run into five volumes only, but soon after they met with an opposition from that section of the Muslim populace which had carried on the traditional life in Dacca. Their venture met a doom in this city, and we do not hear of any such attempt on the part of the Muslims in Dacca in the thirtees. However, the University continued to train larger and larger number of Muslim students coming from the villages and residing in the halls. In the meanwhile the growing tension between the Hindu and Muslim politics of the time had its own influence on the life of the students. Over such a situation came the Second World war (1939-45), the Japanese threat to Eastern India (1942-44), the great famine of 1943 and an upsurge of thought-current in the young mind of the University to work for the freedom of the country. The adoption of the Pakistan resolution in 1940 by the All India Muslim League created a new spirit for movement among the teachers and students of the University. The stage was now set to move beyond the activity meant only for maintaining the identity and go forward for an ideal for the first time set before them. It is in this new attempt that we find the leadership of the city passing from the feeble hands of the traditionalists to the emotional youth who had received the university education, and it is they, no noubt, who were in the forefront of the struggle that led to the establishment

of Pakistan in August 1947.

The story of Pakistan will be told in the next chapter. Here we give the account of British Dacca in its three distinct phases.

Early British Phase
(1765-1905)

Naib Nazim Jasarat Khan : Lieutenant Swinton's arrival in Dacca, which must have been towards the end of 1764, really marked the beginning of the British rule. Muhammad Raza Khan was at that time in charge of the revenue arrangements in Dacca. But Jasarat Khan, who had befriended the English, was soon recalled by the English to Dacca and was re-appointed *Naib Nazim*. We read, "When the disturbances in the province had in some measure subsided, the members of the Council of Calcutta publicly requested Jusarut Khan to return to Dacca and resume the musnud. He accordingly, in 1768, recommenced the administration of the affairs of the province in conjunction with a member of Council as Chief on the part of the English. Two days weekly the *Naib* communicated to his English colleague his transactions, plans, disbursements and receipts in every department, for his satisfaction and the information and approval of the presidency. Two days in each week were also set apart, in which the *Naib* and Chief received appeals from the Courts of justice, and confirmed or reversed their decisions by the assistance of the chief magistrates. By these means the government was amicably conducted ; mutual confidence was maintained ; and the English became informed of the laws, revenues, and customs of the country."[1]

1. Charles D'Oyly, *Op. Cit.* p. 18,

Naib Nazim's residence : On his arrival Lt. Swinton took his quarters in the Old Fort (modern jail) and the *Naib Nazim* shifted his residence to Bara Katra. Later, the *Nimtali Kothi* (see below) was built for him, the only remains of which are two buildings—a gateway now occupied by the Asiatic Society of Pakistan, and another now incorporated in the Dacca Museum building. This entire area was called *Nawabi Dalan* in the 19th century, and it included the *Nawabi Dighi* (the tank behind the Dacca Museum) and *Nawabi Mosque*—a single-domed mosque (now renovated) to the south of the Dacca Museum.

Transition Period : The period between 1765 and 1772 was one of transition from Muslim to British rule, and this, like all periods of transition, was marked by chaos and confusion. Lawlessness became rampant more in the countryside than in the city proper. Dacoits and highway robbers were at large and travelling by boat became absolutely unsafe. This lawlessness was largely due to an abnormal rise of prices. The position became so serious that the English factors in Dacca found it difficult to employ weavers at the old rate of wages. The floods and famines, which followed one after the other in quick succession, still worsened the situation. The years 1769, 1784 and 1787 were distressing years in Dacca. But the biggest flood came in 1788, when the prices rose abnormally high. The rice was then selling at 4 sears per rupee. Probably this economic distress led to the rise of a band of roving dacoits known as *Sanyasi raiders*. In 1763 "a rabble of Fakirs", as Clive calls them, "attacked the Dacca factory and captured it."[1] In February 1771, Mr. Kelsall, the Chief of Dacca, reported that "the Sanyasis were still

1. J. M. Ghosh, *Sanyasi and Fakir Raiders in Bengal*, Calcutta, 1930, p. 36.

levying contributions in all parts where they go ; by the last advice they were at Byganbarry in the pargana of Alepsingh."[1] On 4th February 1773 the Collector of Dacca reported that "a body of 500 Sennasies were arrived at Cogmar (Kagmari), Attea Pargana, about a day and half distant from Dacca and that the people of Dhamarai had deserted their houses and the inhabitants of the city of Dacca were also much alarmed." On the 6th he reported, "Small parties of them approached within 6 coss of Dacca but dispersed in consequence of the preparations at Dacca."[2] On 10th February their second attempt is reported. On the 29th the Chief of Dacca wrote that "the Sanyasis are for the most part retired from this province."[3]

New System of Government : After the passing of the Regulating Act in 1773, striking changes followed in Dacca. In the year 1774 a Provincial Council was appointed in Dacca. While the *Nizamat* (*Foujdari*) administration was in the hands of Jasarat Khan and his officials, *a Court of Diwani Adalat* was established with the Collector of land revenue as its superintendent. In 1781 the administration of the *Nizamat Adalat* was taken over by the East India Company, and Mr. Duncanson was appointed the first Judge of this Court. In this year Nawab Jasarat Khan died, and his grandson Nawab Hashmat Jang was appointed *Naib Nazim*, who held the office for seven years. He was followed by his famous brother Nawab Nasrat Jang, who was *Naib Nazim* for 37 years. His contemporary Charles D'Oyly writes, "The Naib Nazim............is about sixty years of age, and is a man of mild deportment, universally esteemed for the urbanity of his manners, and

1. *Ibid*, p. 44.
2. *Ibid*, p. 56.
3. *Ibid*, p. 57,

the benevolence of his heart. He, moreover, possesses considerable taste for fine arts. He resides at Dacca in a palace very splendidly ornamented in the oriental manner, and his audience chamber is so crowded with English prints and paintings that not an inch of the walls can be seen. In all his visits of ceremony Nusrut Jung is attended by an immense train of horsemen and other followers."[1]

Bishop Heber on Dacca : In 1824 Bishop Heber paid a visit to Dacca. He has left a graphic description of the city : "The river on which Dacca stands, has greatly altered its character since Rennell drew his map. It was then narrow, but is now. even during the dry season, not much less than the Hooghly at Calcutta.........Dacca, Mr. Master (Collector) says, is, as I supposed, merely the wreck of its ancient grandeur. Its trade is reduced to the sixtieth part of what it was, and all its splendid buildings, the castle of its founder Shahjehanguire, the noble mosque he built, the palaces of the ancient Nawabs, the factories and churches of the Dutch, French and Portuguese nations, are all sunk into ruin, and overgrown with jungle............ The cotton produced in this district is mostly sent to England raw, and the manufactures of England are preferred by the people of Dacca themselves for their cheapness. There are still a few Armenians resident in the town, some of them wealthy, with a Church, and two Priests............ There are also a few Portuguese, very poor and degraded. Of Greeks the number is considerable, and they are described as an industrious and intelligent people, mixing more with the English than the rest, and filling many of the subaltern situations under government.........of English there are none, except a few indigo planters in the neighbourhood, and those in the civil and military service. But the

1. Charles D' Oyly, *Op. Cit.* p. 18.

Hindoo and Mohammedan population, Mr. Master still rates at 300,000, cerainly no immoderate calculation, as he says, he has ascertained that there are above 90,000 houses and huts."[1] The population figures given here are not exact. Writing in 1840, Dr. Taylor says, "This decline of manufacture and commerce (see below), as may be naturally expected, has occasioned a diminution of the population of the city. In 1800 the inhabitants were 200,000 but now they do not amount to more than 68,038 in number, according to the census of 1838. Poverty has increased in a far greater ratio than population has decreased."[2] "The lowest ebb was reached about 1867 when the population was estimated to be only 51,636, but this estimate was probably too low as at the census of 1872 it was found to be 69,212. Since then there has been a steady increase and the population in 1901 was 90,542."[3]

Condition of Muslims : In a letter dated 13 July 1824 from Dacca, Bishop Heber writes, "Two thirds of the vast area of Dacca are filled with ruins, some quite desolate and overgrown with jungle, others yet occupied by Mussalman chieftains, the descendants of the followers of Shah Jehanguire, and all of the 'Lions of war', 'Prudent and valiant Lords', 'Pillars of the Council', 'Swords of Battle', and whatever other names of Cawn, Emir, or Omrah, the Court of Delhi dispensed in the time of its greatness. These are to me a new study. I had seen abundance of Hindoo Baboos and some few Rajas in Calcutta. But of the 300,000 inhabitants who yet roost like bats in these old buildings, or rear their huts amid their desolate gardens

1. Bishop R. Heber, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India*, London, 1828, Vol. I, pp. 140-42.
2. Taylor, *Topography of Dacca*, p. 366.
3. L. S. O'Malley, *Dacca district Gazetteer*, p. 58.

three-fourths are still Mussulmans, and the few English, and Armenians, and Greek Christians who are found here, are not altogether more than sixty or eighty persons, who live more with the natives, and form less of an exclusive society than is the case in most parts of British India. All the Mussulmans of rank whom I have yet seen, in their comparatively fair complexion, their graceful and dignified demeanour, particularly on horseback, their shewy dresses, the martial curl of their whiskers, and the crowd and bustle, and ostentation of their followers, far outshine any Hindoos; but the Calcutta Baboos leave them behind *toto coelo,* in the elegance of their carriages, the beauty of their diamond rings, their Corinthian verandahs, and other outward signs of thriving and luxury. Yet even among these Mahomedans, who have, of course, less reason to like us than any other inhabitants of India, there is a strong and growing disposition to learn the English language, and to adopt, by degrees, very many of the English customs and fashions.........They are not, however, the great men only, who are inclined to copy the English; a desire of learning our language is almost universal even here, and in these waste bazars and sheds where I should never have expected any thing of the kind, the dressing boxes, writing-cases, cutlery, chintzes, pistols and fowling-pieces, engravings, and other English goods, or imitations of English, which are seen, evince how fond of them the midling and humbler classes are become."[1]

Nawab Shamsuddaula : Bishop Heber also describes the then *Naib Nazim Nawab Shamsuddaula* : "This potentate is now, of course, shorn of all political power, and is not even allowed the state palanquin, which his brother (Nasrat Jang)

1. Bishop Heber, *Op. Cit.* Vol. II, pp. 340-42.

had............He has, however, an allowance of 10,000 rupees per month, is permitted to keep a court, with guards, and is styled 'highness'. The palanquin, indeed, was a distinction to which his brother had no very authentic claim, and which this man could hardly expect, having been very leniently dealt with in being allowed the succession at all. He had in his youth been a bad subject, had quarrelled with government and his own family, and been concerned in the bloody conspiracy of Vizier Ali. For his share in this, he was many years imprisoned in Calcutta, during which time he acquired a better knowledge of the English language and literature than most of his countrymen possess. He speaks and writes English very tolerably, and even fancies himself a critic in Shakespeare. He has been really a man, Mr. Master tells me, of vigorous and curious mind, who, had his talents enjoyed a proper vent, might have distinguished himself. But he is now growing old, infirm, and indolent, more and more addicted to the listless indulgences of an Asiatic prince ; pomp, so far as he can afford it, dancing girls, and opium, having in fact scarce any society but that of his inferiors."[1] This is the prejudiced opinion of the then Collector of Dacca recorded by Heber. Later when he met the Nawab, he gives his own impression : "He is a good looking elderly man, of so fair a complexion as to prove the care with which the descendants of the Mussulman conquerors have kept up their northern blood. His hands, more particularly, are nearly as white as those of an European. He sat for a good while smoking his hookah, and conversing fluently enough in English, quoting some English books of history, and shewing himself very tolerably acquainted with the events of the Spanish war, and the part borne in it by Sir Edward Paget. His son is a man of about 30, of a darker

1. *Ibid*, Vol. I, pp. 143-44.

complexion, and education more neglected, being unable to converse in English.........He was dressed in a plain white muslin, with a small gold tassel attached to his turban. His son had a turban of purple silk, ribbed with gold, with some jewels in it. Both had splendid diamond rings. I took good care to call the father 'his highness', a distinction of which Mr. Master had warned me that he was jealous, and which he himself, I observed, was very careful always to pay him. At length *pawn* and *attar* of roses were brought to me, and I rose to give them to the visitors. The Nawab smiled, and said, 'what has your Lordship learned our customs ?' Our guests then rose, and Mr. Master gave his arm to the Nawab to lead him down stairs. The staircase was lined with attendants with silver sticks, and the horse-guards, as before, were round the carriage ; this was evidently second-hand, having the arms of its former proprietor still on the panel, and the whole shew was any thing but splendid. The Company's sepoys were turned out to present arms, and the Nawab's own followers raised a singular sort of acclamation as he got into his carriage, reckoning up the titles of his family, 'Lion of War', 'Prudent in Counsel', 'High and Mighty Prince' etc."[1] Again we read, "The Nawab's carriage passed us, an old Landau, drawn by four horses, with a coachman and postillion in red liveries, and some horse-guards in red also, with high ugly caps, like those of the old grenadiers, with gilt plaits in front, and very ill mounted."[2]

Nimtali Kothi : Bishop Heber describes his visit to the Nimtali Kothi : "We drove a considerable way through the city, then along a shady avenue of trees intermingled with huts, then through an old brick gateway into a sort of

1. *Ibid*, pp. 146-47.
2. *Ibid*, p. 145,

wild-looking close, with a large tree and some bushes in the centre, and ruinous buidings all round. Here was a company of Sepoys, drawn up to receive us, very neatly dressed and drilled, being in fact a detachment of the Company's local Regiment, and assigned to the Nawab as a guard of honour. In front was another and really handsome gateway, with an open gallery, where the "Nobut", or evening martial music, is performed, a mark of sovereign dignity, to which the Nawab never had a just claim, but in which Government continue to indulge him. Here were the Nawab's own guard, in their absurd coats and caps, and a crowd of folk with silver sticks, as well as two tonjons and chahtas, to convey us across the inner court. This was little larger than the small quadrangle at All Souls, surrounded with low and irregular, but not inelegant buildings, kept neatly, and all white-washed. On the right hand was a flight of steps leading to a very handsome hall, an octagon, supported by gothic arches, with a verandah round it, and with high gothic windows well venetianed. The octagon was fitted up with a large round table covered with red cloth, mahogany drawing-room chairs, two large and handsome convex mirrors which shewed the room and furniture to considerable advantage, two common pier-glasses some prints of the king, the emperor Alexander, Lords Wellesley and Hastings, and the Duke of Wellington, and two very good portraits, by Chinnery, of the Nawab himself, and the late Nawab his brother. Nothing was gaudy, but all extremely respectable and noblemanly."[1]

Dacca Industries : Dacca, although for many years, the metropolis of the country, was perhaps less indebted to this circumstance than to its far-famed manufactures and extensive commerce, for the numerous population and great

1. *Ibid*, pp. 148-49.

opulence it formerly possessed. The weaving of the muslins, together with the cultivation of cotton, spinning and bleaching, was the chief occupation of the Hindus, while the art of embroidery was the special reserve of the Muslims. The spinning of thread afforded employment to all ranks and classes of the inhabitants of the district in former times. This branch of industry began to be affected in 1824, when British yarn was first imported into the district, and since 1828 it has been in a rapidly declining state. Taylor[1] tells that there were about thirtysix different kinds of cloth manufactured in the district. Flowered, spotted, striped and chequered muslins were manufactured in considerable quantities. The finer descriptions of flowered or Jamdani muslins were made of country thread. This manufacture, according to him, was introduced by the Muslims, and was then chiefly in their hands. "All these different kinds of cloth are distinguished by names denoting the fineness of their texture, their pattern, the origin of their manufacture, or the uses to which they are applied as '*Abroan* running water, and *Shubnem*, or night dew', as being when wet not discernible from either ; '*Doorea* or double threads', '*Charkonna* or chequered', *Circar Ali* or the Newaub's household', etc."[2] Most of the weavers were Hindus. They wove the plain muslins in Dacca, Dhamrai, Teethbadhee, Janglebari and Sonargaon. At the latter place the Muslims formed the principal body of the weavers and made Jamdani muslins. Coarser cloths were made by Hindu "Jogees" and Muslim "Jolahas".

Taylor gives a clear picture of this industry as it developed and declined : "The Dacca muslins were introduced into England between the years 1666 and 1670, and from this time the Engish, some years prior to it the Dutch,

1. *Topography of Dacca*, pp. 172-75.
2. *Ibid*, p. 173.

and subsequently the French, carried on an extensive trade here upto year 1787, in which year the whole commerce of Dacca was estimated at one crore of rupees or 1¼ million sterling. Although the commercial prosperity of Dacca had been in a declining state for sometime previous to the acquisition of the country by the English, yet there can be no doubt that it received its most severe shock from the introduction of mule twist in 1785, in which year no less than 500,000 pieces of muslin were manufactured in England. From 1788 to 1803 is considered the golden age of the cotton trade in Britain, and while her manufactures, increased in extent under the magic influence of steam, were improved by mechanical invention, and fostered by a protecting duty of 75 per cent, those of Dacca, from this imposition of high duties acting as a virtual prohibition of their importation into England, declined year after year, until at length they ceased to be an object of commerce. The exports of muslins to England in 1787 amounted in value to 30 lacs of rupees: in 1807 they were only 8½ lacs: in 1813 they had decreased to 3½ lacs: and in 1817 they altogether ceased and the Commercial Residency was abolished."[1]

Shah Bandar and Narayanganj: Mr. Holwell mentions that the Shah Bandar (an important inland port opposite Narayanganj during the Mughal period) duties amounted to two crores of rupees in 1765. But Taylor[2] corrects and says that this was the actual value of the trade. During the British period the importance of Shah Bandar gradually declined, and its place was taken by Narayanganj. Taylor writes, "It is a great mart for salt and oil seeds, grain,

1. *Ibid*, pp. 364-65.
2. *Ibid*, p. 190.

sugar, ghee, tobacco, metals, timber, lime, etc., and a depot for boats and boatmen engaged in the inland trade. The quantity of salt annually imported from Chittagong and Bulloah amounts to 500,000 maunds and the number of sloops employed in the trade is about one hundred and sixty Mughs and people from the eastern coast below Arracan, including few Chinese, visit Narayangunge during the north-east monsoon ; they purchase betel-nuts, sugar, tobacco and different kinds of manufactures in exchange for catechu, cotton, arsenic, round pepper, gold and silver. The population, according to a census taken in 1838, amounted to 6,252, three-fifths of whom were Hindus, who, together with a few Greeks, are the persons solely engaged in the salt trade. This place has declined considerably within the last thirty years, and a great portion of its former trade appears to be now transferred to Serajegunge, which, since widening of the Jenai, has become the largest mart for country produce in this part of Bengal."[1]

Other occupations : Taylor also gives us the detail of other minor occupations : "Next to spinning and weaving, the art of embroidering is most extensively practised here, especially by the Mussulmans, who display in the use of the needle, a dexterity fully equal to that exhibited by the Hindoos in their labours at the spindle and loom. Ruffogurs or darners are persons employed to repair muslins, that have been injured during bleaching, and also to mark and form the heading of cloths with gold ahd silver thread...... The flowering of muslin dresses is performed by a set of embroiderers called 'Chuckendose', and the embroidering of muslins, scarfs and shawls with silk by workmen called 'Zurdose'.........the principal branch of the art of embroidering and the one that affords the most extensive employment

1. *Ibid*, pp. 99-100.

to the inhabitants of the city, is the flowering of different kinds of cloth with the Moonga or Tussur silk. These fabrics, which are principally made of English twist, are called Khasseidas. They have the pattern of the flower that is to be worked, stamped upon them with a red dye by a class of workmen called "Cheepigurs", after which they are distributed to the embroiderers in the town, by persons (Oastagars and Oastanees), who contract with the merchants for the work, and who supply the embroiderer with silk and an occasional advance of money........... Embroidery appears to be a favourite occupation among all ranks and classes of Mussulman women."[1] This art rapidly declined with the change of taste, and the Muslim women were thrown out of employment. The Dacca workmen, upwards of 300 persons, are also employed in the gold and silver work. They excel in filigree work, and make bracelets, neck chains, ear-rings and other ornaments, and also vessels for otto and rose water.[2] Taylor[3] informs that there were about 500 shell cutters, employed in the arts of pointing the shells, sawing them into rings and polishing, carving and joining the different parts.

Political Events : In political field we find, besides the Sanyasi raids (see above pp. 101-2), the first attempt made by Nawab Shamsuddaula to plan for the overthrow of the British in league with Nawab Vazir Ali of Oudh but to no success (see above p. 106). The next important event that took place was the so-called Mutiny of 1857, which affected the people of Dacca to a limited extent. The day-to-day happenings of this memorable event are recorded by Mr. Brennand, the then Principal of Dacca College. On 30th

1. *Ibid*, pp. 176-77.
2. *Ibid*, p. 179.
3. *Ibid*, p. 180.

July he wrote "A meeting of European and East Indian inhabitants capable of bearing arms was held at the College ; nearly 60 people present. It was resolved to form two corps of volunteers—one of Infantry and the other of cavalry, Major Smith to command the Infantry, and Lieutenant Hitchins the cavalry." 11th August, "Many of the Armenians are leaving for Calcutta. The Europeans are thinking of fortifying the Mills......The Natives scarcely understand the commotion among sahibs, or the object of the volunteer kalpultun who have been keeping up nightly patrols." 15th August, "It has been decided that if the men at Julpigoree do mutiny, the sepoys here shall be at once disarmed. There are about 50 men at the collectorate ; and the plan will be to disarm those in the first instance and afterwards to proceed to the Lal Bagh to disarm the men there and to bring away the guns now in their charge." 30th August, "Yesterday, Sunday, was the great day of Mohurrum. The cavalry volunteers were out all the night patrolling ; they described the town as unusually quiet. The people did not assemble in the same numbers as in former years. Only about 50 were present at the Hosseinee Dalan. It is believed that the Musalmans are completely cowed. 26th November, "The storm that has been passing over India has just passed over Dacca happily.........The dawk, however, brought bad news from Chittagong.........At about 6 O' clock in the evening, it was determined that the sepoys here, the detachment of the 73rd, should be disarmed.........The volunteers were warned to be ready at 5'O clock the following morning. Sunday, the 22nd.........At the time appointed, there were assembled the Commissioner, the Judge and some other civilians, and from twenty to thirty volunteers. It was still dark, and we waited a short time for the signal. The plan was to begin by disarming the treasury guard, to place the disarmed men in charge of the

volunteers ; the sailors would then proceed with their whole force to Lal Bagh.........Everything appeared to go well ; the guards at the treasury were disarmed.........In the meantime the sailors, on reaching Lal Bagh, found the sepoys drawn out, prepared to make a resistance ; they had evidently been apprised of our intention to disarm them. The sentry fixed his musket and killed one of our men ; his example was followed by the others and a volley was fired on the sailors as they advanced through the broken wall near the Southern Gateway. The guns had been placed in position in front of Bibi Pari's tomb, so as to command the entrance, and they opened fire upon our men with grape. As soon as the sailors had got well into the place, they fired a volley. Lieutenant Lewis then led them up the ramparts to the left, charging the sepoys, and driving them before them at the point of the bayonet. The sepoys took shelter in their quarters, but they were driven from building to building by the sailors. At this time Mr. Mays, a midshipman, at the head of eight men, who were under his command, made a gallant charge from the ramparts down upon the sepoy guns ; they were soon taken and spiked, and the sepoys began flying in every direction. There was a severe struggle at the end of the rampart : many of the sepoys were driven over the parapet. Mr. Bainbridge had also a fall over the parapet as he stepped back to avoid the thrust of one of the sepoys. The sailors obtained a complete victory ; the sepoys fled and concealed themselves in the jungle, leaving about forty of their number killed. Many of those who escaped were severely wounded. Our loss was one killed, four seriously wounded, since dead and some more or less severely wounded. Dr. Green, who accompanied the sailors, was wounded in the thigh......... A number of the fugitive sepoys have been brought in. Four of them have been already hung, and several others are to undergo the same punishment. On Monday, every-

thing was quiet again, and we are going on with our work as if nothing had happened, but many of the natives left the city through fear."[1] In the words of another citizen of Dacca : "So all of them were put to the gallows and the Dacca Mutiny thus terminated. The Antaghar Maidan being the scene of this tragical occurrences, used to be looked upon with awe by the people of Dacca, and many superstitious stories were used to be narrated by the people of the surrounding Mahallas—Bangla bazar, Shankhari bazar, and Kalta bazar how the spirits of the departed sepoys used to visit the maidan during the night and how he groans and awful sounds were used to be heard. These stories used to be told by the old people and we never dared to go to the maidan after evening. Thus the Dacca Mutiny ended."[2] In November, 1858 the proclamation of the Government from the Company to the Crown was read in Dacca in English as well as in Bengali in front of the College, the place now developed into Victoria Park.

Baptist Mission in Dacca : In the early years of the 19th century English missionaries arrived in Dacca. The Baptist Mission came here in 1805 and moored their boats in Chota Katra. But their arrival created considerable consternation in the local populace. The Magistrate of Dacca had to order the Missionaries to leave the city. The Mission really started their work from 1815 after the arrival of Mr. Leonard. Their first house was in Chauk area, and in 1887 they shifted to the present quarters in Bangla Bazar where they have built a students' hostel and a reading room.

Expansion of The City : From 1864 onward the town, which had shrunk earlier in the century, gradually extended.

1. *Dacca Review*, Vol. V, 1915, pp. 245-249.
2. Hridaya Nath Majumdar, *The Reminiscences of Dacca*, p. 23.

The northern portions of Islampur, Tantibazar, Kamarnagar, Goalnagar, and Roy Saheb's Bazar, which were then low lands, were gradually filled up by the Municipality ; and the present court buildings were erected after filling up the ditches then existing to the north of the present State Bank Building. It was in about 1835 that the lands of Wari (all Khas lands) were let out and was soon occupied. Gandaria, to the east of the Iron Bridge, was likewise added to the town as a colony of gentlemen towards the end of this century.

Other Developments : From 1830 to 1850 Dacca felt the impact of new changes. This was the period which saw the growth of civil institution like the Dacca Municipality, the Dacca District Board, and also the foundation of Government School and College in Dacca. All these were due to the efforts of four officials—Walters, Taylor, Grant and Skinner.

Dacca Municipality : The foundation of the Dacca Municipality was really laid by Mr. Walters. The nucleus of the institution was the Dacca Committee over which Mr. Walters as District Magistrate had complete control. It appears that some funds were sanctioned by Government for the improvement of the city. Mr. Walters spent this sum, about Rs. 1600/- a month, for the clearance of filth and dirt. He also improved the Chauk area, where roads were widened and the large cannon, which is now at the Jinnah Avenue, were removed from the Sawari Ghat to the centre of the Chauk. It was in the time of Mr. Skinner that the Dacca Committee developed into Dacca Municipality. It was formally inaugurated on 1st August 1864. On 1 October 1887 Dacca District Board was established. The Collector of Dacca was appointed chairman. It was followed by the establishment of local boards.

Educational facilities : The next important achievement during this period was on the educational side, with which Dr. Taylor's name is inseparably associated. He organised the Local Committee of Public Instruction, which was responsible for the introduction of English education in Dacca. He had the assistance of the local Magistrate Mr. Grant. The first English school at Dacca was established in 1835. The school was erected on the grounds of the English factory, now occupied by the State Bank Building. Very soon the Local Committee decided to raise the school to the position of a College. Subscriptions were raised, and the foundation stone of the College building was laid by the Bishop of Calcutta in 1841. The building was completed in the early part of 1846, and the classes were actually started in July of the same year. Dr. T. A. Wise, who was the Civil Surgeon of Dacca, became its first principal.

Other works : On 1 may 1858 Mitford Hospital was established. It was built out of the charitable fund of Rs. 166,000/ bequeathed by Robert Mitford, Collector of Dacca, in 1820. In 1888, Nawab Ahsanullah Bahadur donated Rs. 50,000/ to establish Dufferin Lady Hospital in honour of the visit of Lady Dufferin. The first rail connection between Dacca and Narayanganj was opened in 1885, and in 1886 it was extended upto Mymensingh. The steamer service between Goalando and Narayanganj was regularly started from 1862.

New Dacca Nawab Family : After the death of Nawab Ghaziuddin Haider, the last *Naib Nazim* of Dacca, the line of the Mughal Nawabs came to an end. The *Naib Nazim* was a *mutawalli* of the *Husaini Dalan,* and as such was responsible for the upkeep of this Shiah institution as well as to meet the expenditure of the

Muharram. The death of the *Naib Nazim* upset the old arrangement. We read that one Khwaja Alimullah came forward to bear the expenses from his own pocket. The very next year the Government bestowed the *mutawalliship* on him, and thus his family rose to the premier position in Dacca. This family has no connection with the old Muslim rulers of this province. It takes its origin from the Kashmiri family of Khwaja Abdul Hakim, who migrated to Sylhet and started his business. The members of the family strove hard to amass wealth and rose from the mercantile position to be the leading family in the city of Dacca. Khwaja Hakim's one brother, Maulvi Abdullah, moved to Dacca, and from him issued the present Dacca family. Khwaja Alimullah was his grandson, who purchased the French Factory[1] in about 1838. His son Khwaja Abdul Ghani received the hereditary title of Nawab as well as knighthood.[2] It was he who donated Rs. 50,000/ towards the expenses of giving water-pipe connection to the city, the foundation of this water-pipe being laid by Lord Northbrooke in 1874. The donation was later increased to Rs. 2½ lakhs. In 1877, when the Nawab received the title of K. C. S. I. he gave Rs. two lakhs, subsequently added by two more lakhs, to provide Dacca with electric light. The Ahsan Manzil, their residential palace (now in a neglected condition), is named after Sir Ahsanullah, who was the father of Nawab Sir Salimullah (for his activities see below) and grandfather of Nawab Habibullah, whose son Major Askari is the present representative of the Nawab family. But today the family property is distributed among many claimants, and the position that the family enjoyed for about hundred years in Dacca and Eastern Bengal until partition has now disappeared, except probably in the

1. Taylor, *Topography of Dacca*, p. 97.
2. *Tarikh-i-Khwajagan-i-Dhaka*, Dacca University Ms.

case of a few persons who have levelled up with the newly-rising middle class in East Pakistan.

Dacca The Provincial Capital (1905-1912)

Political Background : It was a strange combination of circumstances that opened a cheering prospect for the city of Dacca, when on 16 October 1905 it was made the head-quarter of the newly-created province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. This elevation was no concession to the city, but was the result of the measures for better administration of the unwieldy presidency of the then Bengal—a presidency which had grown out of the original *Diwani* of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa conferred by the Mughal emperor Shah Alam upon the East India Company in 1765. Since then its original "factory" city of Calcutta grew by leaps and bounds to the exploitation of other regions and developed into a metropolis of the newly-acquired territory as well as the greatest port of the East. Hither came the goods, the merchants, the seekers of employment, favours and privileges—all speeding to get the light from the newly-risen star. Calcutta rose to be the second biggest city in the British empire, and first in the East to open avenues of European learning, intellectual movement and socio-political fervour. This early march gave that peculiar cultural tone to Calcutta, which can be better described as *Anglo-Indian*, and, in contrast to that, the other areas which were not so privileged remained backward. This stigma of "backwardness" was flinged against other cultural groups that did not derive inspiration from this *Anglo-Indian* spirit. Those who profited most were the Hindu *Baniya* classes and the "Bengali" *Babus*, who flocked in Calcutta originally for trade and later for service, and thus helped in the growth of a strong middle class Hindu society charged with new

intellectual spirit and political ideas of the West. The Muslims abhored British slavery politically as well as intellectually, and kept themselves away in the glory of their inherited culture and the dignity of their prestige. While the internal Islamic movements[1] sought to purge the society and religion of later-day accretions, it was Sir W. W. Hunter[2] who perpetuated the term "backward" for the Muslim community and gave rise to that inferiority complex which inhibited that community throughout the British rule. The reversal of this process was not so easy, as the calumny of "rebel" in the eyes of the British was hard to be wiped from the forehead of the Muslims. It is to this desperate circumstance that Muslim awakening to modern life must be traced. Its speed of progress was determined by the fear of political repression on the one hand and the desire of remoulding the Muslim medieval society to a modern shape on the other. The first step was on the educational line taken up by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan at Aligarh and Nawab Abdul Latif of Calcutta.

The Nawab laid the foundation of *Mahomedan Literary Society of Calcutta* in April 1863. "The object of the Society is to impart useful information to the higher and educated classes of the Mahomedan community by means of Lectures, Addresses, and Discourses on various subjects in Literature, Science, and Society, which are delivered, at the monthly meetings, in the Ordoo, Persian, Arabic and English languages."[3] This Society helped a great deal in promoting

1. The incentive given by the teachings of Shah Waliullah and the so-called "Wahhabi" movements in northern India, and the *Fara'izi* in Bengal. For detail see Muinuddin Ahmad Khan *History of the Faraidi Movement in Bengal*, Dacca University thesis, 1961.
2. The author of *Indian Musalmans*
3. *Abstract of Proceedings of the Mahomedan Literary Society of Calcutta*, 1871.

Western education among the Muslims of Bengal and exerted its influence on the Government for a reformed education in the old Madrassah system. In Dacca also we find an institution of *Dacca Mahomedan Friends' Association,* (ঢাকা মুসলিম সুহৃদ সম্মেলন) founded on 24 May 1883, which laid great stress on female education, but the Association, for lack of funds, did not achieve any tangible end. However, it was left to another son of Bengal, Justice Amir Ali to think in a different line. He writes, "Both in England and in India I had frequent opportunities of discussing with Sir Syed Ahmad the position of the Moslems in the political economy of British India, and of their prospects in the future. Syed Ahmad Khan pinned his faith on English education and academical training. I admitted their importance but urged that unless as a community, their political training ran on parallel lines with that of their Hindu compatriots they were certain to be submerged in the rising tide of the new nationalism. He would at first not admit the correctness of my forecast, but I believe the birth of the National Congress opened his eyes. In 1877 when I founded the *Central National Mahommedan Association* we respectfully invited him to give us his valuable support, but he declined."[1] It is important to note that the motive which inspired the Association was again the woeful admission of the Muslim "backwardness". It is stated : "The present backward condition of the Indian Moslems is due partly to internal and partly to external causes. The disintegration of Mahommedan society, the decadence of their principal families, and the general rule which has overtaken all classes of the Mussalman community, combined with the absence of any means to represent to Government, faithfully and honestly,

1. 'The Memoirs of Rt. Hon'ble Syed Amir Ali', in *Islamic Culture*, Oct. 1933, Vol. V. pp. 540-41.

the views of the Mussalmans of India, have placed them in a most disadvantageous position as regards political influence and power relatively to the other Indian communities."[1] The aims and objects are thus outlined: "The Association has been formed with the object of promotion by all legitimate and constitutional means, the well-being of the Mussalmans of India. It is founded essentially upon the principle of strict and loyal adherence to the British Crown. Deriving its inspirations from the noble traditions of the past, it professes to work in harmony with Western Culture and the progressive tendencies of the age. It aims at the political regeneration of the Indian Mahommedans by a moral revival, and by constant endeavours to obtain from Government, a recognition of their just and reasonable claims."[2] In the pamphlet of 1911 the list includes forty-eight branch associations, "spreading from Madras to the Punjab, from Chittagong to Karachi,"[3] but the Association did not arouse popular appeal as the general Muslim masses were still in deep slumber. Another form of educational and social organisation that took its birth in the beginning of this century is the *Moslem Institute*,[4] which had its main head-quarter at Calcutta, but similar institutes arose in the different districts of Bengal. From the third year the Calcutta Institute started issuing quarterly Journal under the editorship of A. F. M. Abdul Ali, the son of the late Nawab Abdul Latif. Strangely enough there was a personal

1. See *Pamphlet on the Central National Mahommedan Association*, 1911. p. 1.
2. *Ibid.* p. 2.
3. *Islamic Culture*, Jan. 1932, p. 9.
4. In Calcutta there were two organisations of the Muslim students of the Calcutta Madrassah: *Muslim Debating Society* and *Society for the mutual improvement of young men.* The two societies were merged together and led to the foundation of the Moslem Institute in July 1902. See Abdul Sattar, *Tarikh-i-Madrassah Aliya*, Dacca, 1959, pt. II, p. 19, f. n. 1.

antagonism between Abdul Latif and Syed Amir Ali ; and the organisations, like the *Mahomedan Literary Society of Calcutta* and the *Moslem Institute* were organised by the members of one family (of Nawab Abdul Latif), while the *Central National Mahommedan Association* was kept alive by the friends of Amir Ali, though he himself had to resign when he was elevated to the Bench. The main activities of these organisations centred round Calcutta. Dacca does not seem to have actively participated in their affairs, though Nawab Salimullah of Dacca Nawab family is known to have attended several meetings of the *Moslem Institute* at Calcutta. In Dacca the *Friends Association* (mentioned before) continued in its moribund state until the promulgation of the first partition of Bengal on 16 October 1905, on which day *Mahomedan Provincial Union* was founded in a meeting held at Northbrooke Hall, Dacca. The meeting was presided over by Nawab Salimullah, who was the patron of the Union. He said, "I feel you will agree with me, I know, that looking to the prospect the new Government affords to the Mahomedans and to the impetus which its formation promises to give to the advancement of our people, our best and heartiest thanks are due to Lord Curzon to whom we owe so much."[1] This day was regarded as "the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Bengal." It also brought to the forefront Nawab Salimullah of Dacca as the foremost leader of the Muslims of East Bengal.

The Partition : Since the time of Lord Dalhousie the question of making administrative readjustment in Bengal had been mooted. The problem of Assam was uppermost

1. Quoted in the unpublished thesis of Dr. Sufiya Ahmed, entitled 'Some Aspects of the Muslims of Bengal (1885-1912)' London University, 1960. I am thankful to the writer for permission to utilise the work for this section.

in the mind of the then administrators. Sometimes it was proposed to carve out Chittagong and hand it over to Assam but the local people had always raised their voice against this severence from the benefits of the administration centred in Calcutta. The question came to a crucial point during the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon who was over-enthusiastic for reforms. The original scheme, which envisaged the transferrence of Mymensingh, Dacca and other districts of East Bengal to the administration of Assam, was circulated in 1903 but was opposed by all sections of people (including Hindus and Muslims) in Bengal. The *Dacca Mahomedan Friends' Association*, in its meeting held on 25 January 1904 under the presidentship of Kazimuddin Ahmed Siddiqi, protested against this partition. Similarly the *Central National Mahommedan Association* raised a voice of protest. In February 1904 Lord Curzon came out on tour to Chittagong, Dacca and Mymensingh. In Dacca he stayed as the guest of Nawab Salimullah in his palatial residence, Ahsan Manzil, and laid the foundation of Curzon Hall on 19 February 1904 in wilderness and predicted in prophetic tone that very soon in place of these jungles would rise the new town of Dacca. During this visit of Curzon Salimullah played a real *Nawab* in his hospitality and had a serious discussion with him in the Ahsan Manzil. The grievances of the Muslims were not so much against the partition but against the curtailment of the privileges and benefits that they were then to experience on being transferred to the Commissionership of Assam. This defect was removed by the enlarged scheme now announced by Lord Curzon who spoke of a new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam under a Lt. Governor with its capital at Dacca. As the Chief Secretary of the then Bengal wrote : "One of the principal results of the adoption of this enlarged scheme is that the interests of the transferred districts should obtain greater attention than they have received in the

past, obtain that is to say, the attention which they require and deserve. There have been wide-spread complaints both by the officers and the people of these districts that hitherto the interests of Eastern Bengal have in many respects received less attention than those of the other parts of the province of Bengal." In the words of Syed Shamsul Huda, "Before the partition the largest amount of money used to be spent in districts near Calcutta. The best of colleges, hospitals and other institutions were founded in or near about the capital of India.........we have inherited a heritage of the accumulated neglect of years."

With the announcement of this new scheme the Muslims changed their mind. *The Mahomedan Literary Society* welcomed it and brought out a manifesto in 1905. Similar change is noticeable in the attitude of the *Central National Mahommedan Association*. Greatest support came from the people of Eastern Bengal and Assam. Nawab Salimullah published an article, entitled "The New Province—its future possibilities."[1] He wrote, "No one viewing things dispassionately can gainsay that the newly-born province of Eastern Bengal and Assam is full of great possibilities. Handicapped as it is at present by the sorely-felt want of extensive railway and river communications, we cannot reasonably expect it, at least for some time to come, to march with an equal pace along the path of progress, moral and material, with the older province.........As the people are now slowly but surely realising that Bengal has been partitioned solely for the benefit of the inhabitants of Eastern Bengal, the misguided agitation and consequent unrest on account of the separation are giving place to sober consideration and undisguised satisfaction......The Mahomedan

1, *Journal of the Moslem Institute*, Vol. I, no. 4, April-June, 1906, pp. 408-12.

population is the preponderating element in this province, and that being the case, they are entitled to the first consideration of the Government.........No one can deny that the partition has roused the entire Mahomedan community of Eastern Bengal. Many poor Mahomedan youths, who had graduated with honours, but were roaming about in search of suitable employment, are now getting prize posts which they so highly deserved. Poor parents who had lost heart on seeing that their educated youths not adequately provided for, have now taken courage and have decided to educate their dear little ones, knowing full well that justice will now be done to them."

It was precisely the benefits now diverted from Calcutta to the masses of Eastern Bengal and Assam as a result of partition, which aroused the sentiments of the Calcutta-centred Hindu Middle class—the class of people who had developed a vested interest in that city mainly on the exploitation of rural Bengal. In the protest meeting held in the Town Hall of Calcutta on 7 August 1905, the representative voice was : "In the new Province the Mahomedan population will preponderate.........the Bengali Hindus will be a minority. We shall be strangers in our own land. I dread the prospect, and the outlook fills me with anxiety as to the future of our race."

Benefits of partition : On 16 October 1906 the anniversary of the partition was observed all over Eastern Bengal by the Muslims. The report was published in *Eastern Bengal and Assam Era* in its issue of 20 October 1906, which recounts the following advantages of the partition (1) The rise and revival of Dacca and the development of the port of Chittagong. (2) Schemes for the development of the neglected waterways and construction of new railway lines to connect the inaccessible regions

with Dacca and Chittagong. (3) The new provincial council would give the landowners and educated middle class opportunity to get a seat and which would enable them to bring to the notice of the Government the inconvenience of the people. (4) The duplication of the administrative machinery would bring about efficiency and thereby would offer greater security to the lives and the property of the people. (5) Assam would enjoy the blessings of a perfect administration and would benefit by coming into contact with the cultured and civilised people of Eastern Bengal. (6) Eastern Bengal which for so long had been practically unprotected would have an effective Police department. (7) Educational facilities which were meagre in Eastern Bengal and Assam would receive due attention from the Government. (8) The experience of one year had shown that the people were able to come in touch with the head of Government, which was unknown in the past.

New Dacca : The foundation of a building laid by Lord Curzon marked the beginning of a process which led to the development of the new town in Ramna. This new town is built beyond the Railway line, which then marked the northern limit of the old city. The new area included the old British military cantonments and spread out all round the Ramna Race Course. But the rebuilding was a long process of construction. A contemporary writer Bradley-Birt says, "But in the midst of it, startling in its newness, brick-red against the time-worn grey, a modern city has begun to rise. As yet it is but in its inception, and its first beginnings give but a faint forecast of what it will one day be. Yet already, in a marvellously short space of time, a temporary Government House has sprung into existence.........Other buildings designed to house the army of officials which follows in the wake of governments, are rapidly giving a modern aspect to the time-worn city, the

twentieth century purple palaces of Public Works contrasting strangely with the graceful domes and minarets of the mosques and palaces of a bygone age."[1] Another contemporary Harold Bridges of the Baptist Mission, Dacca, says, "A new and very handsome suburb of Dacca sprang up at Ramna. This took the form of a veritable garden suburb and was furnished with many large and handsome buildings intended for use as government offices and official residences.........With the building of Ramna practically all the Europeans removed from the vicinity of Bangla Bazar, where they lived for many years, and occupied the beautiful bungalows in the spacious garden suburb."[2] The most important buildings that were then erected include Curzon Hall, Engineering School (now Science section of the Dacca University,) Engineering hostel (now Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall), Dacca Hall, Government House (now Dacca High Court), Secretariat Building (now accommodating Medical College and temporarily Arts Classes of the University), Press Building (now Engineering College), Burdwan House and Ramna Rest House.

Political Consequences : This mixed blessing of the partition was received differently by Hindus and Muslims. To the former it threw a challenge to their political aspirations and to the latter it gave a spur to their dormant hopes of progress and lighted the path of their political advancement. The Hindus rejected the partition outright, organised their rank and file to oppose it and bring about its annulment. The leadership of the Hindus came from the newly-risen middle class society. The outburst of *swadeshi* movement, revolutionary parties, and the extreme form of nationalism were the consequences. Dacca saw

1. *Romance of an Eastern Capital*, pp, 261-62.
2. *The Baptist Mission Society in Dacca*, Ms. p. 61.

the growth of *Anusilan Samiti*, the activity of which may be read in the *Report of the Sedition Committee* (1918). This new wave of nationalism among the Hindus coloured the political movement of the future, and the clarion call for *swaraj* (freedom from British yoke) was its direct result. The Muslims marched on a different line. They had yet to feel the impact of Western education on their society—a society which had not yet been completely awaken even after more than thirty years of *Muhammedan Educational Conferences* and similar other activities. Whatever activities were noticeable was limited to the class of the *nawabs*, *zamindars* and a few educated Muslims. It is in the minds of these persons that ideas of political organisation for the rights of the Muslims had taken shape towards the end of the 19th century. These scattered notions were pooled together during the *Muhammedan Educational Conference of Northern India* held at Calcutta in 1899, which brought the Muslims of Bengal and other provinces together. A common feeling of interest had thus been generated among the Muslims of this sub-continent—the interest which grew out of their peculiar notion of Muslim "backwardness", and they thought of the need for special measures to protect themselves as a *minority*. This last term for the first time flashed into Muslim consciousness when the representative institutions were being talked by the British—the institutions which would give representation on the basis of population. According to this new system the ruling class of yesterday was reduced into a perpetual minority in this sub-continent. To this new awareness came the great Hindu opposition to the first partition of Bengal—a challenge to the legitimate rights and claims of the major Muslim population in Eastern Bengal. The Muslim response was twofold—a Muslim deputation led by Aga Khan waited on the Viceroy on 1st October 1906 to press for the Muslim

rights. The second was the initiative taken by Nawab Salimullah of Dacca. "He drew up a scheme for an *all-India Muhammedan Confederacy,* and this he circulated to different Muslim organisations and leading Muslims in the country. He suggested that the objects of the Confederacy should be to safeguard Muslim interests, to counteract the growing influence of the Indian National Congress, to provide a political organisation through which young educated Muslims anxious to take part in public life, could express themselves, and to work for the continuance of British rule in India. Finally he issued an invitation to Muslim leaders to meet to form such a Confederacy at Dacca in December 1906."

The Nawab's scheme[1] became the basis of discussion at Dacca on 30 December 1906, when the delegates, who had assembled in the beautiful garden of Shahbagh from all parts of India to attend the *All India Muhammedan Educational Conference*, met in a session, after the Conference, under the presidentship of Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk. The Nawab in his introductory speech said, "Time and circumstances made it necessary for Mohamedans to unite in an association so as to make their voice heard above the din of other vociferous parties in India and across the wide seas in England. Unless united in support of one another and working in loyal unison with the Government of India the Moslem majority, through misfortunes and errors, fallen from their once high estate, were in danger of being submerged by the enormous Hindu flood." Nawab Salimullah in moving the resolution said, "New political movement had been forced upon them. Had the party now in power in England been familiar with the

1. For detail see S. Razi Wasti 'Early years of the All India Muslim League' (1906—10) in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. IX, pt. IV, Oct. 1961, pp. 240-60, specially pp. 246-48.

position of Moslems, and had Indian public men represented justly Moslem claims, the movement might perhaps not have been heard of, but quiet unobstrusive work was now at a discount and only those who cried loudest had a chance of being heard. Moslems had therefore been forced against their own wishes to abandon their traditional policy in order to secure easement of very real disabilities, and to avoid the danger that their interests might be neglected whilst other communities in India were benefited............ The resolution he was moving was framed to secure the protection and advancement of political rights and interests without prejudice to loyalty to the rulers or goodwill to their Hindu neighbours." The resolution was seconded by Hakim Ajmal Khan of Delhi and supported by a dozen speakers. It reads, "Resolved that this meeting composed of Musalmans from all parts of India, assembled at Dacca, decided that a Political Association be formed styled All India Moslem League, for the furtherence of the following objects :

(a) To promote, among the Musalmans of India, feelings of loyalty to the British Government, and to remove any misconception that may arise as to the intention of Government with regard to any of its measures.

(b) To protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Musalmans of India, and to respectfully represent their needs and aspirations to the Government.

(c) To prevent the rise, among the Musalmans of India, of any feeling of hostility towards other communities, without prejudice to the other aforementioned objects of the League."

The birth of *Moslem League* was a triumph for Nawab Salimullah and a glory for the city of Dacca. It

was quite natural that Surendra Nath Banerji's paper *The Bengalee* should call the League as "Nawab Salimullah's fad."

The New Province : The first Lt. Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam was Sir Bampfylde Fuller, who was well-versed in Persian and Urdu and had a great sympathy for the Muslims. He came to Dacca with the set purpose of building up the new administration. It is quite natural that he was an eye-sore to the Hindu agitators—those who were raising hue and cry for the annulment of the partition. His attitude was to put them down by strong hands, but such a policy was not approved by the then Viceroy Lord Minto, who had by then realised the importance of the great noise that the Hindu middle class was making in Calcutta. The matter came to a head on a small school affair at Serajganj, which Fuller made a test case of his policy. But the Viceroy had already decided on a new line and he took this opportunity to accept his resignation and to replace him by a man of his own choice Sir Lancelot Haire. This acceptance took the Muslims by surprise. The first brick from the foundation of the new Province was shaken. The Muslims' love for Fuller is evidenced by a large number of Fuller Hostels built in this new Province. The idea for building such hostels came up during the *Provincial Mahomedan Educational Conference*[1] held at Dacca on 14 and 15 April 1906. In this Conference the following resolution was moved by Abdul Majid, B. A., Secretary Board of Revenue, Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam and a member from Jorhat (Assam) : "That in the opinion of this Conference, time has arrived for immediate action with a view to provide at Dacca, a Hall or Hostel with play-grounds attached there-to, for

1. For summary account see *Journal of the Moslem Institute*, Vol. 1, no. 4, April-June 1906, pp. 517-21.

Mahomedan youths studying in the College under the direct supervision of European Principal or Provost aided by resident assistants, a competent Maulvi who will attend to the religious side of their training and as many other tutors as can be entertained for the purpose of helping the students in their studies."[1] We also read that the estimate for the "Moslem Hostel or Hall" amounted to Rs. 3,49,300/-, out of which the very munificent donations of Rs. 1,86,900/ and Rs. 35,150/ were promised by Nawab Salimullah and Khan Bahadur Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhry. The *Moslem Institute Journal* suggested that it should be named "Salimullah Hall" or "Fuller Hostel."[2] But this scheme never seems to have materialised. However, it must be admitted that Muslim education received a new impetus in this new Province. But as a rule the general progress is a slow process. In this particular province, the economy of which was tagged on to Calcutta port, no sudden economic change could be seen, nor could we possibly notice any appreciable rise of the Muslim middle class. The new Province still relied for its political force, besides the Government, on the support of the Muslim nobility led by Nawab Salimullah and the dumb masses of the Muslims.

Annulment of the Partition ; Such a weak political support to the Government policy of partition by the Muslims was drowned in the noisy cry of the Hindu agitators. The authorities were awaken to the sense of maintaining political balance in the country, and they started thinking in terms of alternative administrative arrangement, which would meet their ulterior motive of better administration, pacify the agitators, and at the same time bring home to the Muslim leaders that the scheme of partition was

2. *Ibid*, pp. 480-81.
3. *Ibid*, p. 520.

carried out, not in love for the Muslims of Eastern Bengal, but just to facilitate their own administration. This new line of thinking found a concrete form with the coming of Lord Hardinge as the new Viceroy who proposed a new administrative arrangement. Calcutta *Baniyas* and *Babus* won their claim and the demands of the Muslims were thwarted and frustrated once again in the growing tide of Indian nationalism. The Government then thought: "Various circumstances have forced upon us the conviction that the bitterness of feeling engendered by the partition of Bengal is very wide-spread and unyielding, and that we are by no means at an end of the troubles which have followed upon that measure. Eastern Bengal and Assam has, no doubt, benefited greatly by the partition, and the Mahomedans of that Province, who form a large majority of the population, are loyal and contented, but the resentment of the *Bengalis* of both the Provinces of Bengal, who hold most of the land, fill the professions, and exercise a preponderating influence in public affairs, is as strong as ever though somewhat less vocal." Here the *Bengalis* mean particularly the Hindu Bengalis. It is further added, "The representation of the people has now been carried a long step forward, and in the Legislative Councils of both the Provinces of Bengal and Eastern Bengal and Assam the *Bengalis* find themselves in a minority being outnumbered in the one by Biharis and Oriyas, and in the other by the Mahomedans of Eastern Bengal and the inhabitants of Assam. As matters now stand, the *Bengalis* can never exercise in either province that influence to which they consider themselves entitled by reason of their numbers, wealth and culture."

On 12 December 1911, at the *Delhi Darbar*, His Majesty George V, "announced that the capital of India would henceforward be Delhi and not Calcutta; the

partition of Bengal, which had caused such bitter controversy would be revoked ; Bengal would be one province under a governor in council ; a new province of Bihar and Orissa would be created ; Assam would once more be the charge of a Chief Commissioner."[1] Accordingly on 1st April 1912 Dacca was once again reduced to a district town. This annulment caused a stir among the Muslim populace in Dacca, but they had not yet prepared themselves to fight for their cause. Nawab Sir Salimullah Bahadur was silenced by the coferrment of the title of G. C. I. E. The old men of Dacca attributed this revocation of partition to a curse—which, as the local version goes, was caused by the erection of Ramna buildings over the graves of ancient saints and pious men.

Third British Phase

(1912-1947)

Introduction : The annulment of the partition shook the foundation of the Muslim society in Bengal. It was clear that no longer the old British-elevated Nawabs possessed the real strength to win the legitimate rights and privileges of the Muslims in general. Their voice had become enfeebled and now silenced and sealed by this ignominous defeat. Some fundamental change was necessary in the source of strengh for the Muslims. The nobility and blue blood no longer remained a force in the struggle for power. The example of Hindus had taught them the advantage of fundamental education, and the new system of election to the Assembly now introduced had confused the old privileged families which believed in their inherited prestige, admitted superiority and ruling authority. The

1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V, p. 219.

social environment now changed. In the new system the votes had to be won, begged or bought. It was not possible for the old class of nobles to come down to such begging. This change is emphasised in the election of Nawab Shamsul Huda, a pleader, to the assembly in 1909, and a quiet retirement of Nawab Salimullah to the palatial prestige of old. In this new atmosphere men like Shamsul Huda could alone prosper. A few like him had already come forward into the field. Justice Amir Ali was the pioneer among the Muslims in Bengal, but his genius was not allowed free play to serve the cause of the Muslims. He was won over for the British Bench. There were a few other barristers and pleaders who found the old Muslim atmosphere unsuited to their taste and had taken refuge in the fold of the Indian National Congress. But they were individuals representing only themselves, as was clearly admitted by Abul Qasim, a member from Burdwan, while he was supporting a resolution in the platform of the Indian National Congress at the Calcutta session.[1] If these men had gone to the Congress, the Muslim society must produce others to represent their own particular views. They were to come in due course by a long process of education and training. Meanwhile facilities for education must be provided. It is in this fight for such facilities that we notice a new turn in the political events of East Bengal. The whole question centred round the proposed Dacca University.

Dacca University as a compensation : On 31st January, 1912, Lord Hardinge came to Dacca in order to pacify the Muslims. This occasion was availed of by them to press for another demand. It is recorded : "In an address presented to the Viceroy (Lord Hardinge) at Dacca on 31st January,

1. Quoted in Dr. Sufiya Ahmed's thesis. *Op.* Cit.

1912, a number of Muslim representatives of Eastern Bengal and Assam placed certain proposal with the object of safeguarding the interests of the Muslim community. They pointed out that the Mussalmans had not taken advantage of Government educational institutions to any extent comparable with Hindus, and they expressed their doubts whether the modification of the partition of Bengal might not retard the educational progress of their community. In his reply Lord Hardinge said that the Government of India realised that education was the true salvation of the Muhammadans and that the Government of India, as an earnest of their intentions, would recommend to the Secretary of State the constitution of a University at Dacca. On the 2nd February, 1912, a communique was published stating the decision of the Government of India to recommend the constitution of a University at Dacca."[1]

Controversy over the University :—This proposal for a University at Dacca was probably Government inspired. The controversy that started on its account throws interesting light on the attitudes of the Hindus and the Muslims. These have been preserved in the questionnaire, made by Calcutta University Commission, 1917-1919. In one of his answers Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq[2] pointed out, "It was at first

1. *Calcutta University Commission Report*, Vol. IV, p. 122.
2. Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, *Sher-e-Bangala*, died on 27 April 1962, and now lies buried at the back of the *Mosque of Haji Khwaja Shahbaz*. He dominated Bengal Muslim politics for over half a century after the annulment of the first partition of Bengal. His life sketch is :—

   "1873—Born at village Saturia in Barisal. 1897—Joined the Calcutta High Court Bar. 1903—Worked as a Professor in Rajchandra College for a short time. 1906—Gave up legal profession and became a Deputy Magistrate. 1912—Resigned the service and again joined the Bar. 1913—Became an elected member

meant to be a concession to the Muhammadan sentiment as a set off against the injustice done to the community by the annulment of the partition of Bengal."[1] Quite in keeping with this sentiment, Mr. A. F. M. Abdul Ali says, "If, as is generally believed the idea in giving a pocket edition of a University to Dacca is to reward the Muhammadans of East Bengal for submissively accepting the annulment of the partition, the jurisdiction of the Dacca University should be extended as much as possible. A purely residential University may be the correct thing, but it will hardly benefit the Mussalman community of East Bengal. A residential University is a luxury out of the reach of the majority of the members of a proverbially poor community. In my opinion the Dacca University should be both a residential as well as an affiliating University. All the colleges of East Bengal, nay, even those of Assam, may be allowed affiliation to the University."[2] These points have been more clearly brought out in the representation of Dacca Muslim Deputation : "Eastern Bengal,

of the Bengal Legislative Council. 1916—Attended a special joint session of Congress and Muslim League at Lucknow. The Lucknow Pact was adopted in that session. 1918—Became General Secretary of the Indian National Congress and also became President of the All-India Muslim League. 1919—Presided over the Provincial Congress session at Midnapur. 1924—Became Minister of Education of Bengal under the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms. 1932-33—Joined the Round Table Conference in London. 1935—Became the First Muslim Mayor of Calcutta. 1936—Headed the League-Proja Coalition Ministry of Bengal. 1940—Drafted and moved the historic Lahore Resolution at the All-India Muslim League Conference. 1943—Resigned the Chief Ministership of Bengal. 1948—Shifted to Dacca and joined the Dacca High Court Bar. 1952—Became the Advocate-General of East Pakistan. 1955—Became Home Minister of Pakistan. 1956—Became the Governor of East Pakistan." *Pakistan Observer 28 April 1962.*

1. Calcutta University Commission Report, Vol. IX, p. 114.
2. *Ibid,* Vol. IX, p. 8.

as is well-known, was till the time of partition a neglected area. Muhammadans were the principal sufferers. This was the case especially as regards their education. It was during the days of the partition that serious attempts were made by the Government to devote their exculsive attention to the needs of Eastern Bengal and its people.........The annulment of the partition was, therefore, looked on with serious misgivings, especially by the Muslim section. For it was during the partition days that the problem of Moslem education received at the hands of Government that amount of attention which their importance justified. The Mussalmans naturally felt that the annulment would bring back the old state of thing and that they would again be relegated to the background......it is quite clear that, though the Dacca University question is not essentially a Moslem question, it is a subject which is vitally connected with the problem of Moslem education in Eastern Bengal...... As regards the jurisdiction of the University, Public opinion in Eastern Bengal is opposed to the idea of confining the University to Dacca proper. It is held that its benefit should be shared by all alike, and not by only those who can afford to proceed to Dacca for study. To aim at an ideal state of perfection for its own sake is to sacrifice the larger interests of the Eastern province for whose benefit the University was intended."[1]

As against this Muslim opinion, the Hindu view may be given in the words of Sris Chandra Chatterji: "At the outset let me tell you that I am strongly opposed to the idea of a separate University at Dacca or at any other place within the Presidency of Bengal, for a separate University would mean the establishment of a separate controlling agency. The creation of a separate controlling agency

1. *Ibid*, Vol. IX, pp. 80-82.

would lead to very serious political results. It would mean interference with the steady growth of a feeling of nationality, which is essential for the well-being of the people, and which is being developed through education under the same University. As a matter of fact, I would take the same stand with regard to it as I did with regard to the partition of Bengal."[1] This attitude of opposition was expressed in a different language by the Hindus of Dacca, who made a representation on behalf of the "People of Dacca." They said, "In our opinion, instead of spending twelve lakhs of rupees in the establishment of a new University, which means a heavy recurring expenditure on account of the costly machinery, this sum may be very properly spent in starting a few useful educational institutions in the town......If the above institutions are granted, Dacca can well afford to be under the existing Calcutta University for a decade or more."[2]

Social changes: These answers give a clue to the trend of political events in Dacca. Henceforth the Dacca University, which was established on 1st July 1921, became the real centre of intellectual activity. Most of the newly-erected buildings in Ramna were allotted to the University and its staff. The work started calmly. The Hindus themselves profited most by the opening of this University. In the absence of qualified Muslim teachers the Hindus got the largest share in the appointments at the University. Even among the students there was a wide difference. In the twenties the proportion between the Muslim and Hindu students of the University was 1 : 3, in the thirtees it was 1 : 2, and from 1940 onward it was almost equalised. After partition the Hindu students suddenly left the University reducing their percentage to the barest minimum.

1. *Ibid*, Vol. IX, p. 56.
2. *Ibid*, Vol. IX, pp. 85-86.

In the beginning the University life was almost detached from the old city, but gradually the changes were increasingly felt. The University attracted large number of Muslim students from the rural areas. They lived originally in the single Muslim Hall that was then located in a part of the University building. But larger number were attached students and lived in the city—those who came from the villages lodged with their relatives or accepted *jagir*[1] under some generous family. These students, who were coming from the villages, had Bengali as their mother-tongue and rural manners and customs in day-to-day behaviour. They were almost ignorant of the ways of life that old Dacca had nurtured for centuries. For the first time do we get here a meeting ground of the old sophisticated urban people with the new rising rustic blood—the one which was pulling to the past and the other, untrained in the old tradition, was marching forward to the revolutionary ideas of the West. In the beginning the class of old nobility showed a patronising attitude to this rising generation, and the newly-educated, coming from humbler houses, had no higher aim than to be deputy magistrate or at best to get a place in the Indian Police Service. Many of them got married in the older class and thus a little bit of cultural fusion did result. But very soon that class was outnumbered, and in the growing tide of the student movement new ideas and idealism superseded the dead superstitions of the past.

Conflict of Idealism: The opening of the Dacca University attracted many teachers and students from Calcutta, especially the Muslim students from this region,

1. It is a system by which poor students coming from villages and unable to meet the expenses of higher education attach themselves to a family and help the little children in their studies and do other sundry work for free food and lodging.

who on former days would have gone to that city of learning, now found easier and cheaper to receive that education in Dacca. The Hindus of East Bengal also took advantage of this facility and brought to bear their cultural tradition on the development of the University life. But the greatest influence was exerted by the Calcutta press, publications and ideas carried to Dacca by the teachers, or brought to meet the demands of the rising students. The local publications which started very soon, were too feeble to meet the challenge from Calcutta. However, the new trends seen in these publications are quite significant. Among the newspapers we get the most influencial *East Bengal Times*, edited by Charu Chandra Guha, but the most notorious paper was *Chabuk*. The serious type of magazines included *Pragati* (Progress), edited by Buddha Deva Bose and devoted to the propagation of modern ideas. Another journal *Pratibha* (Splendour) was more of a literary type. One group of the Muslims headed by Hakim Habibur Rahman, Professor Fida Ali Khan of Dacca University, M. A. (Alig.) and hailing from Rampur, U. P., and Khwaja Muhammad Adil of the Dacca Nawab family started the Urdu monthly magazine *Jadu* from January 1923. The revivalist attitude of the writers in this magazine is clear from the title Jahangirnagari that most of them bore, and also from large number of articles on old Dacca, its life and literature. Only the articles of Fida Ali Khan have tried to throw new light on Islamic attitude towards painting, music, dance and such other modern topics. But the poets one and all sing in the old tradition of 'rose and tulip'. I could find only one poem on Dacca by Khalid Bengali who lavishes praise on the city in a very general term. The following lines are again revivalistic :

ہر شان دل نشین ہے ہر آن دلربا ہے
تو دور مغلیہ کا اک نقش جان فزا ہے

ظاھر پھبن پھبن سے انداز اک جدا ھے
پنہاں ادا ادا میں تہذیب ایشیا ھے
پورب کی جان ھے تو اے گلزمین ڈھاکہ [1]

Charming is thy glory and attractive thy demeanour,
Thou art the epitome of the prosperous life of Mughal days,
Thy outward behaviour is different from what thou concealst,—
In thy acts are hidden the cultures of Asia.
O Dhaka, the Garden City, the Queen (of the cities) of the East.

This development in Urdu represented a society which had no deeper roots in this region. Their inspiration was not derived from the struggle of life that the people here were experiencing. It was more a continuation of the old social decorum in which Urdu occupied place of honour. But it was an empty prestige—almost a magical charm—with its vitality lost in this province. For a real understanding of the people's hopes and aspirations we have to turn to the new leaf in Bengali which the Muslims took up late in life in modern time to adopt and enrich with their own thoughts long after the Hindus had overwhelmed the literature with their own contributions. The beginning was a violent one as the years of lethargy and stagnation had dammed a great flood of emotion—accumulation of social evils and survival of out-of-the-way values. The clarion call was given by the rebel poet Qazi Nazrul Islam :

March ahead, you bold youths all,
And, at the doors of Death, listen to the call
of a life that is fresh and new.
March ahead even if your numbers are few.
There sounds the command of thunder !

1. *Jadu* Vol. II. no. 2. Feb. 1924, p. 1.

Throw open the shutters of the house of slumber.
Dress like a soldier today,
And march forward on the tempestuous way.
Usher in the morning red,
March ahead, march ahead, march ahead.
Does the memory of the past glories
Bring tears to your eyes?
Does the thought of royal stories
draw from your bosom tender sighs?
Oh, grieve not for the throne and the crown,
You who have seen Persia, Greece and Rome drown
on seas of oblivion,
You who have seen them rise again with renewed vigour.
March on, march on, march on.
Rousing yourselves from this fatal stupour.
Hearken, there sounds the clarion call.
We must build a new Tajmahal
Out of this dust.
We must, we must, we must.[1]

The call was to break away with the old and ring in the new order. The tone, though might have been influenced by the contemporary national sentiments in Bengal, was mainly inspired by Nazrul's own life, who had had the experience of the First World War (1914-18). He had also known the 1917 revolution in Russia, and his views were chastened with the new revolutionary ideas particularly to rouse the teeming poverty-stricken masses of Bengal. His poetry has different facets—a lesson for the decrepit old society, a challenge to the imperial exploitation, a message of economic equitarianism to the common people, and above all a song to popularise Muslim themes in

1. Cited with the kind permission of Mr. A. K. M. Kabir Chowdhury from his translation of Nazrul's poetry to be published by the Bengali Academy.

Bengali in a language full of vivaciousness and in a tune derived from the rustic Nature of Bengal. The other great trend is noticed in the Bengali novel, *Abdullah*, left unfinished by Qazi Imdadul Huq (1882-1926), the father of Qazi Anwarul Huq, the first Bengali (present) Chief Secretary to the Government of East Pakistan, as his father was the first Muslim novelist in Bengal. The novel breaks with a social theme and brings into question many of the old Muslim beliefs and practices. These two trends were a great inspiring source to the Muslim youth of Bengal who came to receive their education in the University of Dacca. Qazi Nazrul Islam's magazine *Langal* attracted the young mind towards the concept of freedom, but in the opinion of some it had pro-Marxist leanings. However, it is these trends which led on to the foundation of *Muslim Sahitya Samaj* in Dacca on 19 January 1926 under the patronage of our great orientalist Mvi. (now Dr.) Muhammad Shahidullah and on the initiative of four University students Abdul Qadir (now editor of Bengali *Mah-e-Nau*), A. F. M. Abdul Huq (now Jt. Secretary Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan), Anwar Husain (now Zilla School teacher, Comilla) and A. Z. Noor Ahmed (now in the staff of the Dacca University Library). The secretaryship was entrusted to a University teacher Abul Husain of the Commerce Department. The man behind who acted as an inspiring genius was Qazi Abdul Wadud, then a teacher in Dacca College. The *Samaj* issued five annual magazines, called *Shikha*, the first edited by Abul Husain, second and third by Qazi Motahar Husain (later Professor of Statistics Dacca University), fourth by Muhammad Abdul Rashid (a school head-master) and fifth by Abul Fazl (now a well-known novelist and essayist from Chittagong). However, the *Samaj* actually lasted for ten years, and then it petered out. Besides the annual gatherings in which papers were

read and published in *Shikha*, there used to be meetings in between. All the articles did not find their place in the Society's magazine. The students had their own publications, the most important being monthly *Abhijan* edited by Md. Qasim, monthly *Tarun Patra* edited by Fazlul Karim Mallick, monthly *Jagaran* edited by Ahmed Ali, monthly *Sanchaya* edited by Md. Abdur Rahman, and weekly *Azad* edited by Zahirul Huq Chowdhury. All these magazines were short-lived. The motto of the Society was জ্ঞান যেখানে সীমাবদ্ধ, বুদ্ধি সেখানে আড়ষ্ট, মুক্তি সেখানে অসম্ভব। (where knowledge is circumscribed, mind is fettered ; freedom is there impossible). According to Mr. Abul Husain the main aim was—এই সমাজের প্রধান উদ্দেশ্য চিন্তা চর্চ্চা ও জ্ঞানের জন্য আকাঙ্ক্ষা ও রুচি সৃষ্টি এবং তদুদ্দেশ্যে জাতিধর্ম্ম নির্ব্বিশেষে নবীন পুরাতন সর্ব্বপ্রকার চিন্তা ও জ্ঞানের সমন্বয় ও সংযোগ সাধন।[1] (Promotion of ideas, curiosity in knowledge and creative taste to be realised through the establishment of union and harmony between the ideas and knowledge of every kind, old and new, specially of society and religion). Explaining the aim, Mr. Abdul Qadir, the publisher of the first issue of *Shikha* said, "The main objective is to change the direction of the present thought current and social life of the Muslims." (প্রধান উদ্দেশ্য বর্ত্তমান মুসলমান সমাজের জীবন ও চিন্তা ধারার গতির পরিবর্ত্তন সাধন।) Many articles brought to light the utter contradictions in the Muslim society and hit at the fetters that had bound it down within hollow conventions and social trammels. The cry was to break through them and follow only those principles of Islam which guaranteed freedom of mind and concession to those social customs that were rooted in the soil. A typical sentiment as it then moved the young students' mind is translated below :

1. *Shikha*, 1st year, 1333 B. S. p. 22.

"In conclusion let me take leave after stating only this that in Bengal enough attempts have been made to preach *Shari'ti-Islam*, but that has not been accepted, nor could be accepted, by the people of the soil of Bengal. As in other countries, even here that (i. e. the preaching) has been a shere waste. In no way that is leading to any possible creation of life. In spite of some defects the *Ma'rfati-Islam* in this country has resulted in some creative thoughts peculiar to this region, simply because the latter has infused a new life into the local society, people and their traditions. On the other hand the attitude of the (orthodox) *Alims* (Scholars)—only imitative or pulling back to the tasteless strictures of orthodoxy—has been a curse and an obstruction to the flow of life in this country. They could neither create anything new themselves nor could they lead others to the new path. It is mainly because their mind was not directed to the problems of this soil. If we are at all desirous of translating the simple, healthy, and invigorating religion of Islam in the life of a Bengali, then we have to gather light from the blazing trail of the *Ma'rfati-Islam*. We have to make the people of Bengal stand face to face with other men of wide world. Our aim will not be to follow blindly our motto, but we will strive for a nobler creation in the life of humanity. (মানব জীবনের সুন্দরতম বিকাশ।)[1]

Such sentiments are quite natural because whatever Muslim religious works were produced in Bengali in the past, were limited in scope and content, mainly confining to *Fiqh*, life of the Prophet or Hasan or Husain, some *Marsiya* verses and a few romances based on Arabic and Persian original. Mystic ideas were found in works like *Gyan Sagar* (জ্ঞান সাগর) and folk ballads but these were mixed

1. *Bichira* (monthly magazine) Calcutta, Chaitra, 1335, B. S. p. 557.

up with the surviving Hindu and Buddhist beliefs and practices. Therefore the accusation of the writer, mentioned above, is quite understandable. It was the purpose of this *Samaj* to make up for this deficiency and enrich Bengali with their own thoughts and ideas. Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah, in one of his speeches explained, "a Muslim writer need not lead to the creation of *Muslim Sahitya* (Literature). The Hindu *Sahitya* is fed from the Vedant, Gita, Hindu History and life. Our *Sahitya* will be based on Quran, Hadith, Muslim History and life. The Hindu literature gathers flavour from the Hindu society and ours will get from the Muslim society. It is through this literature that the Hindus and Muslims of Bengal will recognise each other. Cognition is the basis of love."[1] Two things result from this: One is the development of Bengali among Muslims as their language of literature and thought, and the other is the desire to cultivate greater harmony and friendship with the Hindus on the basis of correctly understanding each other's culture. It is for this reason that many Hindus participated in the functions of the *Samaj*. As a corrolary it follows that the primary duty of the Bengali Muslims was to create Muslim Literature and establish his identity. In the days of the *Khilafat* movement and soon after this Muslim consciousness was no bar to union with the Hindus, but in the thirtees the situation changed, and the same consciousness led on to different path.

Politics and Emotionalism: The road led through the thorny bed of roses as interests, individual and collective, clashed between the Hindus and Muslims who fought for their rights and privileges. The system of election adopted in India had aligned the Muslims in one group and the Hindus in the other. The old historical cleavage thus received a

1. *Shikha*, 3rd year (1929), p. 4.

new political colour, and all talks of cultural fusion and amity were drowned in the noisy clashes of politics. The public sentiments were too high to be under control. The result was Hindu-Muslim riot. Ever since 1926 the Hindu-Muslim relation in Dacca was affected. Gradually Dacca turned to be a storm centre of riots. The first riot took place during the Hindu festival of Janmashtami in 1926 over a flimsy trouble caused by the sale of a banana boy dealer. These riots also penetrated the University life. The different communities of students fought among themselves. Even today Shahid Nazir Day is commemorated on 2nd February every year in memory of Shahid Nazir, who fell a victim to this riot in 1942 within the University compound.

It seems that these riots led to the gradual decrease of the Hindu students in the University of Dacca. Even if this suggestion be wrong, the number of the Hindu students dropped by 200 in 1941-42 as a result of the Japanese threat in the Second World War. The famine of 1943-44 resulted in the general decrease of the students—Hindu and Muslim—in the University. The famine affected most the country side, and the villagers flocked in thousands in the city. As a result the prices rose abnormally high. The poor were hard hit. Starvation and death were the common sight in the city. The Second World War also brought new people, new ideas, and at the same time slackening of morals. As a result of War measures Dacca Air port was built. Military hospitals for British and the Americans were opened. The wounded were kept in the Salimullah Muslim Hall and in the building which has now been turned into Dacca Medical College.

The politics had moved faster than the War. The same younger generation who had taken unto themselves the task of reorienting the Muslim Society were now caught

in the political meshes of the time. The old social ideals were forgotten and the new political slogans aroused them to a sense of establishing their political identity over and above the social and cultural that they had been trying to do earlier. The adoption of the Pakistan resolution on 23rd March, 1940 at Lahore further goaded the students and the teachers of the University towards a new goal. We find Mr. (now Dr.) Mazharul Huq (now Provost of Salimullah Muslim Hall) starting a fortnightly paper in support of the Pakistan movement against the then defection of A. K. Fazlul Huq, the "Tiger of Bengal" from the camp of M. A. Jinnah. Soon after 1942 the students formed *Purva Pakistan Sahitya Samsad*, of which Syed Ali Ahsan (now Director of the Bengali Academy, Dacca) was the Secretary and Syed Sajjad Husain (now Head of the Department of English, Dacca University) was the President. Instigated by the new War emotionalism, the students moved forward into the field of politics, and the freedom battle, which was the cry in post-war period, was fought from their shoulders. After all they composed the significant intelligentsia among the Muslims of East Bengal. It was this din and bustle of the Pakistan struggle which united the Muslims of this sub-contitent into a common emotional uproar to march forward to Pakistan, born on 14th August, 1947.

CHAPTER VII

DACCA

THE CAPITAL OF EAST PAKISTAN

Creation of Pakistan : The Second World War was a boon to the people of this sub-continent. On the one hand the Japanese initial victory made it clear that the Orient, if united and set on modern lines, could be as efficient as the Occident and on the other the proximity of war on the eastern front, which the common mass, at least of Bengal, was ever desirous to welcome, accelerated the political consciousness of the people. The spirit of fighting for their cause was dinned into their ears, and the political leaders were not slow to feel the pulse of their people. In the post-war period the events moved too fast, and the British administration was unable to cope with the situation. The returning soldiers added fury to the fire. The air was surcharged with freedom movement. The British must quit. But who was to succeed—the Hindus or the Muslims ? The politics in the post-war period was clear cut : Indian National Congress and All India Muslim League were the pre-eminent forces, which had their well-defined goals. Their supporters were equally stubborn and stiff. The attitude was on the one hand to fight against the British and on the other to fight for their respective aims. The reaction among the masses was terrible. The civil administration almost broke down. There was danger of country-wide chaos. The soldier Viceroy Lord Wavel realised this fully and on his advice the British chose to quit and hand over power to the two political parties. Fortunately they agreed to compromise, and for the first time history witnessed the peaceful transfer of power from the sovereign

lord, the British, to the sovereign successors, the people of this sub-continent. On 14th August, 1947 a new country of Pakistan was created.

Dacca again Capital : Dacca once again rose from its humble position to be the capital of East Pakistan. On 14th August, 1947 a momentous meeting was held in Curzon Hall, in which Khwaja Nazimuddin was sworn in as the first Chief Minister of the independent province of East Bengal. The city witnessed a new birth in the world of freedom, happiness and progress. New air breathed into the atmosphere. The silence of the roads was broken by the ever-growing sound of the buses, lorries and taxis. The loneliness of Ramna welcomed the hustle and bustle of life. The slow-moving town, with ample rest and rendezvous, suddenly felt a shake with the onrush of officials and new gentry. The old Dacca, with its medieval atmosphere, awoke to witness the rise of a new capital.

Expansion of the city : From a mofussil town during the British days to a metropolitan capital of East Pakistan[1] Dacca sped forth to assume a new garb. The rush of offices and new officials increased the tempo, and the new-comers, pouring in large numbers, created the problem of accommodation. As a result there was heavy rush in the older buildings. The Secretariat was opened in the old Girls' College, Eden Building, round which has now grown up the entire paraphernalia of the Government of East Pakistan. The Central Government has its own Secretariat built anew in Segun Bagicha. Many of the University staff quarters were requisitioned for the officials and ministers. The Assembly Hall of the Jagannath Hall was appropriated for the Legislative Assembly. Only last year it was released

1. This new name was officially adopted later.

and given back to the Hall. The old Dacca Intermediate College building accommodated the Dacca High Court. On 18 April 1962 the foundation of a new building for High Court in front of the Secretariat was laid by Lt. General Azam Khan. The High Court area has now been earmarked for museum and Public Library. The University of Dacca has now been allocated the whole of the Nilkhet area for its own buildings. Eden Girls' College has now its own building at Azimpura, and the Dacca College shifted to Dhanmandi in July 1956. The first residential areas taken up for construction included Plassey Barracks, Azimpura Estate and Dhakeswari Quarters, all meant for government servants. The New Market in Azimpura was opened in 1954. The rush of people from outside spread out from Purana Paltan to Naya Paltan. The higher section of the business class found accommodation in the newly-built Ispahani Colony and Bilalabad. Then came the turn of Iskatan Gardens, where on one side we have private houses and on the other Government flats sprawling right up to the Ladies' Club. Still ahead now stands the Holy Family Hospital founded in March 1953. The houses in New Iskatan were built on private enterprise for letting out to foreignors, especially the Americans who have been pouring in larger and larger numbers after 1954. The Government then took up the Police Barracks in Rajarbagh, Post and Telegraph Colony in Shantinagar and other staff quarters in this area. The public came along to fill the gaps, and the whole area of Siddheswari, Kakrail, right up to Kamalapur, grew up into a large residential colony. The new railway station is under construction at Kamalapur. In 1954 the present building of Notre Dame College was erected. The other side of the College developed into the Commercial area of Motijheel, where we have the seven-storied Adamjee Court, the office of the Pakistan

International Airline, Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation building, automobile workshops and other foreign business agencies. After 1953 the Dhanmandi residential area came up with its buildings and opened a new opportunity to the house builders to rent out their houses on exhorbitant rates. The tenants were soon found in the ever-increasing number of the Americans in the city, who have given their impress to this area having the cross-roads numbered serially as in American cities. But now the houses spread out right up to Muhammadpur Colony. On the northern side Tejgaon Industrial area and the Tejgaon Airport have been developed fully. Beyond the airport spreads out the Dacca Cantonment, and beyond the Industrial Area lies flat the Gulshan just ready for new houses. The roads received greater attention since 1954 when the streets of the old city were metalled, Jinnah Avenue along with the Stadium was built, and the Inner Circular Road connecting Motijheel with Mug Bazar Road came into existence. But a greater interest in the road construction, under-ground sewrage and city-planning was taken after Dacca Improvement Trust was founded in 1956. It was only during the governorship of Lt. General Azam Khan that further impetus to the building project in Dacca was given, the dual carriage, which was orignally built only in Jinnah Avenue, was lengthened up to the airport, and several other roads broadened.

Social Changes : There was tremendous change—political apart, social, religious and racial are none the less important. The population increased and became more diversified. The old faces—most of the Hindu nobility—disappeared from the streets of Dacca, and went to the land of their own choice in India. Thousands and thousands of Muslims poured in here and jammed the streets and every nook and corner. A mosaic of people—Bengalis,

Beharis, Gujratis, Madrasis, Panjabis, Pathans—trudged along the roads in their variegated dress ahd still differing tongues. They appeared like a confused mass of human groups looking for shelter and resettlement. Brisk was the atmosphere. Only the *muazzin's* cry sounded a soothing effect upon their heart. This Islamic spirit and the common heritage of Muslim India were the uniting bond of the people, who had chosen to bid goodbye to their old hearths and homes ar[illegible]d build up for themselves a new homeland of Pakistan[illegible]

Y[illegible] he population in Dacca was not so much shaken as it [illegible] in West Pakistan where the uprooted refugees fro[illegible]t Panjab and Western U. P. crashed in to find s[illegible]l shelter. The increase in the population here was [illegible]dual along with the establishment of new offices and the opening of new business. Through both these channels outsiders poured into Dacca. The higher offices were filled by the senior civil servants from up-country in the absence of the Bengali Muslim officials and the big business as well as business executives both attracted business class of Muslims from Delhi, Gujrat, Kathiawad and West Pakistan, the Bengali Muslims feeling very shy in this work. But the latter were also coming into the city from different parts of Bengal to receive education at the University, to fill the large vacancies now open for them and to supply the main corps of man power to run the business, industry and government. The Hindu Marwaris who earlier monopolised trade and commerce in this province, for the first time met a challenge in this new class of Muslims. There is no doubt that today the new urban industries in East Pakistan are almost all in the hands of the Muslims, but the Marwari business is still dominant in the rural areas. The Agakhanis, the Bohras, the Delhi-walas and the Chinotias (businessmen from Chinot in the Panjab) have established themselves in industries and

higher trade, the petty shops being left in the hands of the local Muslims. However, the education has brought forward larger and larger number of young Bengalis to the forefront. They have in course of years replaced outsiders in the services and are gradually scaling up in different occupations of life. Yet they have not so far shown keenness in industries and monopolistic trade. Today the society in Dacca presents a thorough over-haul of what obtained in pre-partition time. The nobility of those days is completely vanished. The main business class is a new-comer who has wealth and wit to profit by the situation provided there is peace and secure administration. The young Bengalis are a rising generation who by 1962 are securely placed in the Government offices, but the overflooding of the city has not yet subsided. There are many problems yet remaining to be straightened.

Political Developments : The establishment of Pakistan solved only one problem--the homeland of the Muslims in this sub-continent—but created many others for the adjustment of the mental make-up for new home. The new country had to be defended, put on a going concern, and had to yield a common ideal for the future. Meanwhile two of the fundamental breaks from the past had to be realised, but realisation is not so simple in the human mind. The first is the disappearance of the All-India concept from the mind of the Pakistani Muslims—a concept which lay in the past at the root of the Muslim League politics in relation to the other communities of this sub-continent. No longer did the Pakistanis face the Hindus, but they had to meet the new country of India. In the light of the changed situation fresh relationship could be established with India, but such an abstraction in socio-political field is probably not possible. The developments in the subsequent years stiffened the old relationship and

the migration of refugees from India together with the continued Hindu-Muslim tension further coloured the vision of the future policy makers. The Indo-Pakistan diplomacy, to a historian, appears like a continuation of the old game of politics between the Hindus and the Muslims. The second is the naked truth that Pakistan consists of two wings East and West—a realisation which came much later in the administrative arrangement of the two units by creating a single unit in the West after amalgamating the earlier provinces in 1955. Pakistan was no longer composed of the Muslims of the pre-partition days with a religio-*kultur* as a driving force, but had to meet the demands of her citizens in the two wings. In the light of this geographical pattern things could have been set in a different order but such a drastic change in the system inherited would have needed a shake-up in the administrative machinery. That was hardly possible. Under the prevailing circumstances the whole outlook emerged from the single interest embodied in the vague idealisation of Pakistan. To a historian this vision is a projection of the old dream and emotionalism that lay behind the struggle for Pakistan during the British days.

In the years that followed three main factors moulded the evolution of the first concept: the continued migration of the Muslim refugees into Pakistan, the Kashmir tangle and the threat that India posed to the very existence of Pakistan. These factors subordinated the natural growth of the second concept. Consequently the local demands expressed themselves in several stresses and strains that were brought to bear on the Central Government. The politics that developed in Pakistan revolved round the central theme of gaining more and more concession to local needs. The refugees, being new-comers, were unable to appreciate the local sentiments and were thrown, without any choice, on the opposition. It was natural for

them to hold aloft the old ideals of the Muslim League which had inspired them to leave their home and come to Pakistan. But while they could afford, at least in the present generation, to remember their Indian homes and raise slogans on old sentiments, the men of the soil, being burdened by day-to-day problems of life, sought for better standard in the age of freedom. As West Pakistan was imminently affected by the three factors, mentioned above, the provincial politics there coalesced smoothly with the central structure, save, of course, a few pin-pricks in some quarters. But East Pakistan had a different tradition in the past. In the cooler days of reconstruction, after the emotionalism of struggle was over, the normal problems of life stared into the eyes. The old social regeneration, which marked the Muslim society in the late twenties and early thirtees in Dacca and which was submerged under the new movement of Pakistan (see above p. 150) burst forth under a favourable atmosphere of independence. But the circumstances had changed. The old movement was purely social and literary with the object of establishing the identity of the Muslim in the face of the Hindu advance (see above p. 146), and hence the supporters included many Urdu speakers, like Hakim Habibur Rahman,[1] Dr. Mahmud Hasan[2] and Dr. W. H. A. Shadani.[3] But the new move

1. He was president of the 5th annual meeting of the *Muslim Sahitya Samaj.*
2. He was once a chairman of the reception commitee in the annual session of the *Muslim Sahitya Samaj.* Dr. Mahmud Hasan was professor and Head of the Department of English, Daca University. He later becam the Vice-Chancellor, then-Joint-Secretary and Educational Adviser to the Government of Pakistan, subsequently posted as Pakistan's ambassador in the Middle Eastern countries, and finally retired as a Chairman of the Publice Service Commission, Eastern Pakistan.
3. Then a lecturer and now Professor and Head of the department of Persian and Urdu, Dacca University.

expressed itself in political garb under the changed atmosphere of East and West Pakistan, when Urdu and its paraphernalia, which was brought by the Indian refugees, had been accepted by the West. The acceptance there was easier because the language of the educated class was already Urdu. In the East Bengali had been fighting a successful battle for the last thirty years. In any case that was also the language of the educated class. As a result the new interests expressed themselves in the language controversy. The sentiments were hardly understood by the old guards of Muslim League, much less by the people of West Pakistan who had no means of knowing the local developments. The emotional movements reached their peak in the early fortees, and they overflooded the *Dhakaiya Urdu* and the class of people that had kept on to old social etiquettes and mannerisms. The new trends overturned the scale. Bengali overstepped its proper channel of regenerating the society and became a political slogan.

Emotionalism took a new shape in East Pakistan, which fed on the disparity of conditions of life obtaining in the Eastern and Western wings—disparity which was a past heritage and which could hardly be set right under the situation facing Pakistan in the early years. Those who were saddled in the administration naturally got the whole blame. Facts of anomaly that prevailed in the country were ignored and the demand grew up that parity in all respects should be immediately established between the two wings. To talk of parity is well and good and all well-wishers would like to have it sooner than later, but to make a political capital out of this for winning an election is an altogether different thing. The language issue had now found a new expression, and parity became a catch-word in the orations of the politicians.

The sentiments ran so high that no political parties could contain the outbursts of the youth whom they had themselves taken advantage of at the time of election. The election brought new men but problems remained the same, and though the passing of years did bring about some changes, the major demands remained unfulfilled even by the choice leaders of the new movement. True, they were not to blame. It was the rut of life which they understood when in office, and they had to pace their steps in orderly development. It is here that the parties miserably failed because they had no different programmes to carry out except to maintain themselves in office. But the people were impatient to see the fulfillment of their assurances. In this turmoil parity, which was really a compromise solution, led on to the demand of "full autonomy."

By the year 1958 the politicians' armoury was exhausted. Even the attempt of the civil servants to balance the situation and place facts before emotionalism proved a failure. The leadership was not powerful to switch on the people to a commonly accepted goal for the good of the country. Or was it lack of leadership that brought about this political malaise? Or was it due to the deterioration of the general morale of our life? There was something, inexplicable at the present stage of our historical knowledge, which necessitated the mediation of the army in order to arrest the "disintegration" of the political force in the country. It is for the future historian to judge how far the army regime has succeeded in building up a new administration to meet the ever-growing demands of the people and at the same time to boost public morale towards the goal of integration of the two wings into a homogenous whole of Pakistan. The changes that have taken place during this regime are no doubt of such abiding nature that in the years to come they will have tremendous

effects on the socio-economic life of the country. Now that the regime will soon be handing over power to the elected representatives, it is time to ask :—Are we going to move towards that goal which the army regime had kept in view ? Do our actions today add brick after brick to build the new path ? Are we clear in our perception as to what we aim at and what we are doing ? The historian must leave these questions for the politicians to ponder over and answer in their heart of hearts, and wish that in some future day another historian may pick up the thread, left here, and weave the story of Dacca under Pakistan in a better perspective.

Chronology of Events : In the meanwhile let it be recorded that in 1954 election the Muslim League in East Pakistan suffered such a sweeping defeat that no ruling party in any democratic country has experienced so far. The Muslim League had apparently done its job by creating Pakistan but failed miserably in the act of rebuilding. Taking advantage of the bad name of the League in East Pakistan other parties shot up to capture the imagination of the people. The only party which had some name before was the Awami League under the general leadership of the Oxford-graduate Husain Shaheed Suhrawardy, a fomer Chief Minister in undivided Bengal, and under the popular leadership of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani in East Pakistan. The election created many new parties and the victory went to a coalition of the Krishak Shramik party, Awami League and Nizami Islam. The coalition was headed by the late Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq,[1] the Grand old Muslim Politician of Bengal who had a chequered career in the past in relation to Pakistan. However, the coalition

1. For his life see above pp. 138-39 and 150.

had to meet the challenge of the Muslim League at the Centre and to pacify the temper of emotionalism that had been aroused in the province. In both these they proved a failure. The disturbances in some quarters and some political lapses on the part of the coalition head led to the imposition of section 92 of the old constitution. Major General Iskandar Mirza took over as a military governor of the province in June 1954. The restoration of the ministries in the following year brought forth two personalities Abu Husain Sarkar and Ataur Rahman Khan[1] who became Chief Minister of East Pakistan alternatively. Suhrawardy's main concern was to have control over the Central Government while Fazlul Huq was also lured away for some time to the Centre as a Home Minister. But the presence of even these tried politicians of East Pakistan at the Centre and a favourable ministry born out of the rousing sentiments in the home province could not meet the situation and create an atmosphere of cool calculation and patient work of rebuilding. Coolness probably is not a character of youth. It comes after maturity in thought and deed. But politics in East Pakistan has been played on the shoulder of the youth—the class of youth which is not a permanent group in the society but which consists of the ever-increasing number of the rural young coming to Dacca for receiving education. These young men and women have known even worse conditions of life in their country homes than what they see in Dacca. It is this impermanent quality of the educated youth which makes them more volatile. And this volatile nature underlay the politics of East Pakistan so far. It is not necessary here to detail the changing relations of this youth to the parties in power. However, it must be noted that the Awami League Party of Suhrawardy further split up and led his great supporter Maulana Bhasani

1. See above p . 56.

to lay the foundation on 26 July 1957 of National Awami Party in opposition to him. The new party tried to gather strength on the basis of many demands left unfulfilled by their former colleagues. But in the meanwhile the old Awami League and the Krishak Shramik parties crashed against each other in factional fights, which led to the promulgation of Martial Law on 7 October 1958. A second change on 27 October of the same year brought forth Field Marshall Mohammad Ayub Khan as the President of Pakistan. Since then the political developments have been in abeyance with the exception of a new experiment in Basic Democracy—a form of a new tiered democracy from below—which voted confidence in President Field Marshall Mohammad Ayub Khan on 14 February 1960, and led to new elections in April-May 1962 under the new constitution promulgated on 1 March 1962.

Changing Idealism : The younger generation in East Pakistan had moved forward from socio-religious trends of the twenties and thirties to politico-economic struggle in the forties. These years of struggle had left behind a legacy which passed on to the youth of the University and Colleges year after year. They were awake to the burning idealism which led them on to Pakistan—a new world of freedom and an embodiment of all that they had felt for their home of Bengal. In this new country Islam was already entrenched and there was no fear of Muslim identity being misunderstood. Two things still clashed ideas in the younger mind. One was the Western thoughts, morals and experiences, learnt through books, which were pursuading them to give up their medieval outlook and regenerate themselves in the new order. The other was their country home, country life and environment, and the hopes and aspirations of the suppressed millions which were now exploding to find due expression in the new life of

the day. The solution was not simple as East Pakistan had to go along with West Pakistan where local developments had gone on different lines in pre-partition days, leaving behind their shadows long enough to affect the future trends. Both approach towards recreating themselves in modern life but the angle of vision is different. While Iqbal's thought dominates the ideas of West Pakistanis, Nazrul's revolutionary ideas and modern trends in Bengali literature move the minds of East Pakistanis. Freedom of mind বুদ্ধি মুক্তি is not a new cry in East Pakistan (see above p. 146). This freedom has led to a rupture in the literary movement in East Pakistan. One group seeks to realise the ideal through the concept of Islam while the other group breaks through the bonds of Islam and attempts to embrace modernity in all its new garb. The approaches are distinctly marked and make for fundamental differences in the outlook. While these trends can be clearly read in the literary products of the land, no individual writer can be singled out as dominating the whole field.

Yet these trends have produced substancial transformation in the society. Gone are the days when the ladies were nailed to the hearth. The veil now survives in a limited circle of conservative society. The lure of education has now pulled out the old grand-mother, the mother and the daughter from the dark homes. It is a fashion for the ladies to go marketing in the streets of Dacca, or move about in the Ramna Green Park with friends and relations. Singing, dancing and music are Nature's gift in East Pakistan, which the Hindus have left behind for the rising generation to pick up and develop further. Americanism is a new taste in the city which has gradually increased with the returning "Full-brighters" and "Grantees" in other fields. These foreign visits have accelerated the pace of the mental make-up of East Pakistanis who revolt against the backward home environment.

The home must be reformed. But the new home must be found in the country. The country must create the new atmosphere for the home. The home must be expressed through the country. The language of the home must reverberate in the country. The old Bengali movement of the twenties and thirties found a vigorous expression in this new atmosphere. About three decades of education in Dacca University had gone by to create the new atmosphere. The language movement in the post-partition period was a natural consequence of the years of longing in the young Bengali heart. The movement was a challenge to the British-created concept of nationalism based on one language, one race, one culture etc. This new move was hard to reconcile in the beginning with the birth of Pakistani nationalism. The outbursts were violent which shook the whole of East Pakistan and led to the red letter day on 21 February 1952 in the history of the youth movement in East Pakistan. This day is celebrated since then all over the province as a *Shahid Day* in memory of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for this movement. A *Shahid Minar* is also under construction in memory of this event on the same spot.

The movement brought about the downfall of the Muslim League in the province. But the downfall of a party is not so important as the character of the movement. The party in power only carries out a set programme for which it has been voted by the people and its success or failure in the next election depends upon the degree of its earlier achievements. But here in East Pakistan this was not the issue at stake. It was a complete socio-economic change in the outlook after the creation of Pakistan which the Muslim League members, elected before the partition, had now to face. The party in power was now dealing with a new situation, for which they themselves were no

doubt responsible, but for which they were neither prepared nor had any ready solution. Their old diagnosis was of no avail, and it is natural that they were swept out of office. But the manner in which the subsequent parties fared and the demands rose up from newer to newer grounds in the same resurging spirit suggests that the age of volatile rupture is not yet over. The situations have been changing very fast in East Pakistan probably because the rush of people into the urban life is not commensurate with the pace of development. It was expected that the abolition of the old zamindari system, which was established according to the Permanent Settlement of 1793, might ease the situation in the rural life. But while the new regulation has decidedly ruined the old established families, there has yet to be born a new social force in the country which will act as a moderating element in this fast-moving world. Hence the increasing number of problems, which will probably have no end any day, remain at heart to cause a burning rancour. In the meanwhile how to get at those problems ? And what is the solution ? It has not been possible to get a thorough and correct answer to these questions so that they could be recorded in a historical narrative. What is that goal to which we are leading East Pakistan ? This is the question which a historian would like to put to the politicians and ask them to attempt an answer, not in the day-to-day activity of the country, but in the historical setting of the emergence of the Muslims of this sub-continent from the abysmal decline of the later Mughal days to the new world of freedom and progress in Pakistan.

CHAPTER VIII

MUGHAL MONUMENTS IN DACCA

Introduction : Dacca is pre-eminently the city of the Mughals. The monuments that now lie in and around Dacca have been mostly erected by, or under, the Mughals. But it has never been the good fortune of Dacca to welcome a Mughal emperor or to inspire him to build a palace or a pleasure resort here, as he was wont to do in his capitals at Delhi, Agra or Lahore. However, five Mughal princes graced this city, and some of them attempted to leave behind a memorial of their own. To these were added the lofty mansions of the Mughal governors and nobility. The mosques, tombs and fortifications gave variety to noble pavilions and joyous gardens. But changing circumstances in the history of Dacca and mutability of time both combined to lay their ruinous hands on this monumental heritage. A destructive nature and human neglect have accelerated the decay of the monuments. The fate of the city in British times, reduced as it was to a mofussil town, chilled the remaining interest in its glorious past. The city lingered on with its dark circuitous lanes of the Mughals, ruinous structures peeping hither and thither, and at places towers and domes casting their deep shadows on the water of its old companion the Buriganga. The *muazzin's* shrill cry went up from the tops of mosques only to keep a link in the Dacca of old and modern.

From the early 19th century modern Dacca gradually emerges into occasional prominence. A new wave of enthusiasm for European style and manners created new buildings, which adorn the old Mughal city, now cleaned and tidied up. The ruinous structures were removed and

the charming Ramna came up on the foundations of old. Lofty and spacious buildings raised their heads between 1905 and 1912, only to forecast the coming changes of 1947 and continue the progress onward to the new glory of Dacca.

The monuments that now remain here, may not be of high artistic or architectural excellence, but they are important in so far as they keep up the chain of history, and at the same time display, even in their romantic ruins, the glory that once belonged to them. They will always interest those who will like to have a diversion from their busy occupations and look for a moment the eternal life of the city. There is charm and romance, but no glamour. This beauty of the city is depicted in the following three chapters.

Date and Type :—The historical monuments, erected in and around Dacca, belong to Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Sikhs. The Muslim monuments range in various dates, and include mosques, tombs, fortifications, caravenserais, bridges and other secular buildings. The important buildings of the Christians are the churches, which go back to 17th century A. D. The Hindus have their *maths* or temples, which, though founded in very remote antiquity, not definitely known, have been mostly remodelled in later periods. The Sikh *Sanghats* go back to 17th century, but their architectural remains show a complete adoptation of Muslim style. All these monuments are built in brick.

Architectural Style[1] :—The earliest Muslim buildings in and around Dacca are mosques and tombs, which go back to the period of Independent Sultans. The most obvious features of these buildings show unplastered

1. For full detail see A. H. Dani. *Muslim Architecture in Bengal*, Dacca, 1961.

walls with brick surfaces having carved designs on them, sometimes mixed with enamelled tiles. They always have octagonal *minars* at the corners and simple arched entrance without any pretence to give prominence to it. Above the entrance the parapet and the cornice are gently curved, and the dome, which is semi-circular, rests directly on the roof without the intermediary of a base or a drum. The interior is a pillared hall, pillars being used to support the domes. These are the broad features, on the basis of which a visitor can easily distinguish these monuments. The best example of this kind is the *mosque at Rampal* near Vikrampur. In Dacca, *Binat Bibi's mosque*, though plastered later and its dome rebuilt, still retains the curved cornice and parapet on the back side.

With the coming of the Mughals Bungalow type of buildings came into prominence, and these are referred to in a number of places in *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*. They have generally a rectangular hall with plastered walls, relieved with arched panels, and the roof formed of cross vaults with each segment slightly curved and the ridge of joining rounded. The shape of the roof very nearly resembles the canopy on the top of *I'timad ud-Dowla's tomb* at Agra, and obviously is of North Indian origin. The best examples of this type are the *Churihatta Mosque* near the Chauk and the *tomb* inside the Dacca High Court. These roofs fundamentally differ from the local Bengali style of hut roof, which has always bent and drooping eves. This latter example can be seen at the *Dhakeswari temple* and the *Begambazar mosque* near the Jail.

The other great change, that the Mughals introduced into this province, is the mosque style consisting of three domes on the roof, and the facade, being relieved with

panels, pierced with triple archways—the central archway is slightly bigger than its fellows and set in a projected fronton. Sometimes these archways open under a semi-dome. The parapet is straightened and further enlivened with blind merlons. The domes have a definite base or drum and hence gain in height. Sometimes the central dome is bigger. The corner *minars* are crowned with plastered kiosks. The interior is one rectangular hall. The pillar of the pre-Mughal time are completely given up. Single-domed mosques and tombs also continue, but everywhere the central doorway is given prominence. In fact, the fashion of erecting monumental gateways had come to Dacca in the time of Shah Shuja. The finest examples of this type are the *Bara Katra Gate*, and Southern Gate of the *Lalbagh fort*. These are the important elements which constitute the Imperial Mughal style at Dacca. The finest period of Mughal architecture at Dacca was the viceroyalty of Shaista Khan and prince Muhammad Azam when some of the best buildings were erected probably with the help of masons imported from Agra and Delhi. Thus we can, with some justice, speak of three sub-phases of the Mughal architecture at Dacca—pre-Shaista Khani Style, Shaista Khani Style, and post-Shaista Khani Style. But it must be forewarned that Shaista Khani style does not mean a style invented by Shaista Khan.[1] It only refers to that phase of the Imperial Mughal Style that is seen in Dacca during his long viceroyalty of twentyfive years.

This Mughal style continued in 18th and 19th centuries, especially in religious buildings, like mosques and tombs, but deterioration can be marked in the use of ornamental merlons (which are now generally scratched in plaster), net-work desings in plaster, over-abundance of pinnacles, and the application of colour to the merlons. The

1. Cf. remark by R. D. Banerji in *An. Rep. A. S. I.* 1924—25, p. 92.

European style gradually intruded first in the secular buildings and then in religious ones. The first thing to be copied was the pillar with Corinthian capital, the acanthus leaf of which was rudely outlined in plaster. Then came the semi-circular arch with prominent key-stone. The vaulted roof of the Mughal type was given up, and iron girders were used for support. The first building of this type is the Gateway Building of the *Nimtali Kothi*, now Office of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan. We also find a flourish of decorations in plaster, noticeable in most of the 19th century buildings of Dacca. The Gothic arch may also be seen, and coupled windows or triple windows of European type are also occasionally found. The present windows in *Chota Katra Gateway* are examples of this type. Besides, we get buildings erected in purely European style, like the Dacca High Court or the State Bank Building.

The Christian churches are all built in European style, but the Tejgaon Church shows influence of the contemporary Mughal styte in its facade.

The Hindu temples show varying types and designs. We have here single-spired temples, with or without the verandahs on the sides ; *panch-ratna* (i. e. having five spires on the roof) type of temples ; shrines with typically Bengali roof, or as at Dhakeswari, the spire consists of the superimposition of such roofs, which gradually recede as they go up, and finaly end with *Kalasa* finial. In one case the private chapel in Raja Babu's house has been turned into a public place of worship. All these betray some influences of Muslim architecture.

The only Sikh *Sanghat*, which has retained its old feature, is that existing at Shuja'tpur behind the public library (now handed over to the University of Dacca). The

ground-plan of this building is an exact copy of Bibi Pari's tomb except for the corner minars and the monumental arched openings which are absent here.

Ramna Group of Monuments

In Mughal period Ramna area was divided into two *mahallas*, Chishtian and Shuja'tpur—the latter named after Shuja't Khan, a famous military commander at the time of Islam Khan (See above p. 64). Skirting these two *mahallas* to the north was the *Kat-ghar* (See map no. 4). This area was almost deserted after the downfall of the Mughals, and it was strewn over with Muslim graves interspersed with jungle growth. In 1825 Race course was built here (see above p. 76), and probably after that time the area became a usual place for stroll. In 1859 the area was known as "Rumna plains" (see map no. 4). After the first partition of Bengal (1905) the jungle was cleared and many graves removed, and the present Ramna was built.

1. *Tomb of Hazrat Chishti Behishti* (*Islam Khan Chishti*)

The tomb is situated to the south of the High Court Building inside its compound. It stands on a raised plinth, but excepting for the ground-plan and the roof, it has been extensively repaired. It is a single domed square building with a domical canopy of the North Indian type. Nothing is known about the person buried here. Hakim Habibur Rahman surmises that some relative of Islam Khan Chishti, the first Mughal Governor of Dacca, is buried here.[1] Mr. S. M. Taifoor[2] believes that Islam Khan Chishti himself is buried here, as we are told in

1. *Asudgan-i-Dhaka* pp. 48-49.
2. *Glimpses of Old Dhaka* p. 40 and appendix.

Baharistan,[1] but he seems to be wrong in asserting that his tomb in Fatehpur Sikri, erected by Jahangir, is just a fake one. *Mathir-ul-Umara* definitely says that Islam Khan's dead body was carried to Fatehpur Sikri.[2] It may be that this was the place where originally Islam Khan's dead body was temporarily kept, and after it was carried away, the name Chishti Behishti lingered on in people's memory.

2. *Tomb and Mosque of Haji Khwaja Shahbaz and Grave of Sher-e-Bangala*

These are situated in the south-eastern corner of the Ramna Race Course, just behind the High Court. Haji Khwaja Shahbaz is stated to have been a merchant prince of Dacca. He built the mosque as well as his own tomb during his life time. An inscription set up over the central doorway of the mosque informs that it was constructed by him in 1089 A. H. (A. D. 1679.)[3]

Both of them stand on a raised plot of land, the tomb lying on the east and the mosque on the west. Other remains beyond the tomb probably appertain to the care-taker's quarters. The buildings fully illustrate the Shaista Khani style of architecture.

The mosque (pl. VI) is an oblong building, measuring 68′ by 26′ externally, with four corner towers, octagonal upto the parapet and circular above it, terminating in a ribbed cupola. The main facade shows, in the middle, a projected fronton, bordered with slender minarets, through which opens out the main doorway, having multiple cusped arch slightly pointed. On both sides of the doorway along

1. *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, Vol. I, p. 257.
2. *Mathir-ul-Umara*, p. 693.
3. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, p. 29.

the verticle are five rows of triple niches. There are two more arched entrances one on each side. The corner towers have other minarets by their sides while the parapet is decorated with blind merlons. The roof is covered with three shouldered domes. The interior (pl. VII) presents a graceful appearance with its three domed bays. The squinches at the corners and arched panels along side, and below them a row of decorative merlons have been suitably arranged in the bays, which are separated from each other by gracefully cusped lateral arches supported on twin responds. A number of other wall arches elegantly relieve the plain surface, while on the west we have very attractive mihrabs. The outer arch of the central mihrab springs from beautifully tapering pillars, and has foliaged design at the spandrels. All the architectural parts as well as the decorations have been so appropriately arranged that the whole produces a very pleasing effect.

The tomb (pl. V) is a single-domed square structure, measuring 26′ each side, with octagonal domed corner towers and a verandah, 11′ 2″ wide, attached to it on the south. Each side has an arched entrance opening under a semi-dome which itself is set in a slight projection. Numerous panels relieve the plain surface while the merlons which usually decorate the parapet have not been restored in recent repairs. The roof is covered with a shouldered dome having basal leaf ornament, and lotus finial on the top. The additional verandah on the south is in ruins. Its roof and the front screen of arches have disappeared and thus left an open gap for the interior to be seen. This side of the tomb has three arched openings, two of which have been closed. The arches are cusped, and they spring from beautifully tapering shafts. The interior has squinches at the corners, and arched panels along side, while the dome is decorated with merlons and arabesque designs. On the floor lies the masonry cenotaph of the Haji.

To the west of the mosque now lies the grave of A. K. Fazlul Huq, *Sher-e-Bangala*, who died on 27 April 1962 (For his life see above pp. 137-38).

3. *Musa Khan ki Masjid*

The mosque is situated in the north-western corner of the Dacca Hall compound. This area was formerly known as Bagh-i-Musa Khan. Musa Khan, the son of the famous Barabhuinya Zamindar Isa Khan, surrendered to Islam Khan (See above pp. 28-29) and was later allowed to pass his life in peace. This mosque is said to have been constructed by him,[1] but the style of architecture is Shaista Khani, and it seems that the real builder was Munawwar Khan, the son of Musa Khan, who probably constructed it in the time of Shaista Khan, or even later.

The mosque stands on a high platform, underneath which are living rooms. Its panelled facade with its three arched doorways, each opening under a semi-dome, ornamented parapet, shouldered domes, each resting on battlemented drum, corner minars with extra minarets by their sides—all bear such close resemblance with the *mosque of Haji Khwaja Shahbaz* that they cannot be far removed in date. The only difference is the high platform that we notice here, and the absence of the beautifully cusped lateral arches in the interior. The mosque has been recently repaired and the panelled decoration of the facade has been much altered.

To the north-east of the mosque lies the grave of Musa Khan.

1. Habibur Rahman, *Asudgan-i-Dhaka*, pp. 50—51.

4. *Ramna Kalibari*

In the centre of Ramna Race Course this temple complex stands out most prominently. It belongs to the Dasanami sect, having the title of Giri, of the famous Sankaıacharya's order. In the map of 1859 it is known as "Kerpa Sidhee" (correctly *Kripa Siddhi*) Akhara. According to temple record Gopala Giri was the first man to come here from Joshi *matha* near Badrinarayana and establish this organisation about 450 years ago. The main temple, as it is now, was erected by Har Charan Giri about 250 years ago. Since then later repairs and some additions have been made to it.[1]

This temple area is enclosed within an ancient brick wall, to which a modern gateway has been added on the south. The tank in front of the gate was excavated by Rani Vilasani Devi of Bhowal. As we enter through the gate, we see on our left the remains of a square structure with a *vedi* in the centre. Here was the oldest temple. Close to it stands the second temple, built in a purely Bengali style of Hindu architecture, though Muslim arched doorways and panels have intruded in. It is a square building, raised on a high plinth, with faceted stumpy pilasters at the corners, and a roof domical in shape but exactly copying the local *chauchala* bamboo hut. The facade is relieved with arched panels, each panel having smaller arched window. The heaviness of the structure and the unplastered surface (the present plaster is of much later date) speak of its great antiquity, and there is no reason to doubt the temple record that it was constructed for the teacher of Kedar Rai, one of the Barabhuinya zamindars, in the late 16th century A. D. In its north wall is half

1. For another account see Roy's *Dhakar Itihasa*, Vol. I, pp. 369-72.

embedded the *samadhi* (death memorial) of Gopala Giri. Many other *samadhis* can be seen near about, and further off is set a rough stone, of which mysterious tales can be heard from the temple *pujari*.

We then cross a big square platform where, in the past, people used to assemble in the month of *Chaitra*. Near this platform is the *samadhi* of Har Charan Giri, built as a spired temple with its lower cella an octagon and the spire a tall cone. Deeply curved *chhajjas* separate these two parts of the temple, which is further enlivened with cusped arches, panels, and slender minarets at the corners.

The main temple, which has a tall conical spire, stands on the top of a substructure containing small rooms —a style which is first seen in the 18th century in the case of mosques (see above No. 3). A flight of steps, flagged with stones, leads up from the south-west. The plan of the temple is based on a tantric conception, having a square cella with verandahs on four sides, and open platforms at the corners—the plan appears to be an adoption from Bibi Pari's tomb. The verandahs have flat vaulted roofs with coping arches at the sides. A multi-cusped archway from each side leads into the temple. The interior has now a marble floor, but originally had eight petalled lotus. The ceiling has a dome supported on pendentives. On the inner side the wall is carved with figures of serpents. In the centre is a *simhasana* (lion-throne) on which is installed the image of Kali. Near her feet is placed the *linga* (phallus).

About hundred yards to the north-west from this place is another temple complex, known as Siva *mandir* (temple). It enshrines the memory of a saintly woman,

23—

Anandamayi, who renounced the world and dedicated her life to the path of salvation.

5. *The Sikh Temple at Shuja'tpur*

This Sikh temple is situated on the right side of the road which goes from Ramna Race Course towards Nilkhet just behind the Public Library (now given to the University.)

About its history Guru Bakhsh Singh writes: "It is said that sixth Guru (in Jahangir's time, early 17th century A. D.) sent a very zealous missionary and a holy Sikh, *Almast* by name, to Jahangirabad (a mistake for Jahangirnagar), as Dacca was then officially known and it was this *Almast* who established this monastery. Third in succession to *Almast* was Nathi Saheb, after whose name the Sangat is known among the Sikhs. A stone inscription in the well of the temple tells us so, and reads as given below :-"In the name of True God, the Creator, and of Guru Nanak, (attached to) the Guru Gaddi at Nanakmata of Almastraj. Babu Natha Sahib's Sangat at Shuja'tpur. Mahant Premdas. Well repaired in 1890 (Vikramaditya corresponding to the Bengali) current Shak 1240=A. D. 1833."[1] Another Bengali inscription was fixed on the top of the well, now no longer traceable.

This Sikh organisation is located in a big compound, which can be entered through an arched gateway from the northern bylane. The interior falls into two parts—the temple-cum-residential complex on the east, and the western half containing a masonry tank, a well and other *samadhis* (death memorials). The eastern half consists of a rectangular court, on the northern and southern sides of which range residential rooms, and its western side is occupied by the

1. *Dacca Review*, Vol. V, 1915, p. 228.

temple. In the court was a *vedi* (raised seat), on which was set a black stone containing foot-print (probably of some *Guru*), now disappeared. The temple consists of multiple rooms arranged round a central square room,—four rooms on its four sides and other four at the corners,—in all nine. All these are interconnected by arched doorways. The roof is a flat vault resting on coping arches at the sides. In the central room is a small platform, on which used to be kept the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

The ground-plan of this temple exactly follows the arrangement of rooms in Bibi Pari's tomb.[1] In other respects it differs from the latter. It seems that this temple was erected in the early 18th century A. D. probably by Natha Sahib.

The last representative of this Sangat, Sri Chand Yati, whose inscription is dated 1915, found on a marble slab fixed in the wall on the southern side, left this place after 1947 partition. The temple is now in a neglected condition. Most of the old materials have disappeared.

6. *Dhakeswari Temple*

This temple is not exactly situated in the Ramna area. It lies beside the Dhakeswari Road near the Dhakeswari Government quarters.

The goddess Dhakeswari is regarded by the Hindus as the presiding deity of Dacca.[2] The local tradition about the derivation of the name Dacca from that of this goddess has already been told.[3] Another tradition records the erection, or rather reconstruction, of this temple by Raja Mansingh.[4] The exact date of its building can not be given.

1. See below no. 11.
2. Roy's *Dhakar Itihasa*, Vol. I, p. 367.
3. See above p. 13.
4. Roy's *Dhakar Itihasa*, Vol, I, p, 368.

The style suggests 17th century as its date. However, later reconstructions are writ large on the existing temples. Bradley-Birt records : "The present temple is only two hundred years old, and is said to have been built by a Hindu agent in the employ of the East India Company."[1]

There are two groups of temples (*pl. XXI*) inside a walled enclosure, to which a modern gateway provides an access. In the same compound we also meet with rest-houses, and outside there is a tank. One group consists of four spired temples, all standing on a raised plinth. Each one of them is a shrine by itself, consisting of a square cella topped over with six receding tiers of domical roof of the Bengali type. The finial is a spiked *kalasa* (jar) enclosed within lotus bud. The walls are plastered, and all the sides, except the north, have arched door-ways, to which cusps have been applied on the outer face. Above the door is a bold horizontal moulding, between which and the domical roof is a semi-circular cusped arched panel. Another temple group lies to its east. It can be approached through a 19th century monumental gateway. From the modern *mandap* (hall), where on the floor is to be found a small pit with a wooden apparatus by its side for goat sacrifice, we can see the temple in front, with its three pyramidal *sikharas* (stepped pyramid)—the central one bigger than others—each crowned with pinnacles at the corners. The *sikhara* in fact consists of four receding tiers. the first is a Bengali domical roof and the remaining three are the North Indian canopies, the whole crowned with a lotus finial. In plan, the temple consists of three rooms—the central one larger than others—in a row, with a vaulted verandah in front, the access to which is provided by three

4. *Romance of an Eastern Capital*, p. 265.

arch-ways, each one of them springing from slender round pillars. The spandrels are relieved with leogryphs and other foliaged designs decorate the facade, which further shows a curved cornice topped over with merlons.

The plan of the temple with its three-roomed bays and three pyramidal *sikharas*, fronted by a veradah, strongly recalls the contemporary plan of the Mughal mosque, and though there are differences in detail, many of the Muslim elements can also be seen. The whole design of the temple gives a pleasing appearance.

Lalbagh Group of Monuments

All these monuments lie in or near Lalbagh fort. They were erected between the years A. D. 1679 and 1706. Except for the last two this group represents the finest products of the Shaistakhani style. They would have ranked among the noblest buildings of this sub-continent, had they been completed and well preserved.

7. *Fort Aurangabad*
Commonly Known As Lalbagh Fort

The construction of this fort was commenced in A. D. 1678 by prince Muhammad Azam during his viceroyalty of Bengal, but before this work could be completed, he was recalled to join the emperor Aurangzeb in his war against the Marhattas.[1] Aulad Hasan notes : "His successor, the Amir-ul-Umara Nawab Shaista Khan, did not continue the work, the fact that his daughter Bibi Pari died while it was in the process of construction leading him to consider it unlucky."[2] The surviving structures confirm this

1. *Tarikh-i-Nasratjangi*, p. 152.
2. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, p. 4.

statement that the fort remained unfinished and incomplete. The earliest mention of Lalbagh is found in the *Dacca Diaries* of the English Factory, dated 9th July, 1689, where we are told that Lalbagh, besides being the residence of the Nawab was also used as a prison, in which some Englishmen were then kept under custody.[1]

The main purpose of this fortification was to provide a defensive wall to the palatial buildings of the interior. It was to be of the type of a palace fortress rather than a seige fort.

The existing remains consist of the main north and south gates, about 800 feet apart, together with the wall, about 2000 feet long,[2] and bastions between the south gate and the south-western corner and most of the western side. Between the north gate and the north-western corner is a third smaller gate, but there is no evidence that the intervening wall was ever begun on this side. Beyond south-western corner are the remains of the City Gate. This corner was formerly washed by the river Buriganga, but is now separated by a stretch of meadow and huts from the present bank. Over the defences are erected terraced wall, pierced with a number of rectangular door openings and decorated, on the inner side, with sunk panels. Probably it was also intended to re-enforce the brick defensive wall by an internal embankment of earth, which exists to the east of the southwest corner. The embankment contains an underground room, probably a summer house, entered through a doorway under a half-dome, ornamented with plastered net-work. East of the embankment remains of arcaded brick buildings with plastered panel decoration occupy the line of the bank upto the south gate. Between the latter and the south-western corner are five semi-octagonal

1. *Dacca Review*, Vol. VIII, 1918, p. 11.
2. Cunningham, *A. S. R.* Vol. XV, p. 128.

bastions, filled with earth to rampart level. The bastion next to the gateway is of exceptional size with an external gun-platform, 13 feet wide, at that level ; above the platform the tower shrinks to normal size, with walls 3′9″ thick, with a rectangular doorway on each face and panel decoration as noticed before. This bastion was excavated some years ago by Dr. Nazimuddin Ahmed, superintendent of archaeology. The excavation revealed several changes in the original plan. A doorway, later closed, appears to lead into the thickness of the fortification wall. It also seems that the superstructure of doors and panelled wall over the fortification is a later addition. The south-western corner tower (pl. III) has also an external platform but only 4′9″ wide. All the bastions as well as the defensive wall are decorated, on the outside, with ornamental merlons at the rampart level. Unfortunately a new construction has now been made by the department of archaeology, Government of Pakistan between the South Gate and the adjacent bastion, and this has marred the antique beauty of the monument.

8. *South Gate* (*pl. IV*)

The principal architectural feature of the Lalbagh fort is the South Gate, which, though incomplete, appeals for its grace and chaste beauty. It is a three-storeyed structure with a fronton, bordered with slender minarets. The top storeys are incomplete, but the fronton below opens into a four-centred archway, framed in a stonework, under a brick half-dome bearing traces of ptastered net-pattern. Of the three flanking stages on either side of the fronton, the lowest is a four-centred half-domed alcove with panel decoration, whilst the upper two are fronted by a four-sided oriel window in two stages, terminating in a half dome. The window opening are framed by pillars

supporting moulded brackets. On the inner elevation the two corners are crowned with small domed kiosks. The interior of the gate chamber in the lowest storey is domed with plaster net-pattern and other foliaged designs in the ceiling. The whole detail of the gate speaks of grace and beauty, which we find in most of the monuments at Dacca erected at this time.

9. *Tank and the Audience Hall*

In the middle between the north and south gates there is a fine masonry tank, 235 feet square, now in a deteriorated condition. To the west of the tank, at a distance of 130 feet there is a double-storeyed building with subsidiary domed structures in the neighbourhood. This is reputed to be an audience hall. Its second storey might have served that purpose, but of the bath, so much spoken of, nothing recognisable now remains. These have been so much renovated that they hardly merit any description. Still farther to the west, at a distance of 275 feet, stands *Bibi Pari's tomb* ; and beyond that, at 170 feet still farther to the west, there is a small three-domed mosque. We shall begin our description with the mosque, as it comes closer in style as well as in date to the Souh Gateway.

10. *Lalbagh Mosque (Pl. II)*

Tradition ascribes the building of this mosque to Prince Muhammad Azam, and the style of its construction confirms it. The mosque stands at the back of a low platform, and is of oblong plan, measuring 65′ long by 32½′ wide with corner minars crowned with plastered kiosks. There are three openings on the east, the central one being the the largest and slightly projected with flanking slender

minarets. All the openings have four-centred heads, and are inset below high multi-cusped arches with net-pattern half-domes. These, together with the profuse panelling of the walls, which are further surmounted with battlemented cresting give a pleasing appearance to the facade. The roof is covered with three domes, the central one bigger than others, and they spring from octagonal drums ornamented with merlons. The side-domes are slightly bulbous and fluted, with basal leaf pattern. The finials covering them are crude. Internally the three bays are of equal size, but the diameter of the lateral domes is reduced by the intervention of half domes on pendentives, on which the actual dome springs on a further series of pendentives. This is the beginning of a process which seeks to emphasise the central dome, and hence reduce the size of the side ones by shortening the length of the mosque. The length, which used to be three times the breadth is reduced, but the diameter of central dome is kept equal to the width. Consequently the side-dome has to be of smaller size.

11. *Tomb of Bibi Pari* (*pl. X*)

Bibi Pari (Lady Fairy) better named Iran Dukht, (see above p. 71) was the daughter of Nawab Shaista Khan, and was betrothed to Prince Muhammad Azam, but unfortunately died in A. D. 1684.[1] Over her remains the tomb was constructed by Shaista Khan, who took special care

1. Cunningham, *A. S. R.*, Vol. XV, p. 130 ; Habibur Rahman, *Asudgan-i-Dhaka*, p. 95. Mr. S. M. Taifoor (*Glimpses of old Dhaka*, p. 96,f.n. 1), doubts the authenticity of Bibi Pari being the daughter of Shaista Khan. He thinks that this mausoleum may belong to some other wife of Muhammad Azam. But while we know from the *Vasiat-nama* of Shaista Khan that he had a daughter called Bibi Pari, we are not told at all about her death.

to import building materials from North India, such as basalt from Rajmahal, sandstone from Chunar and white marble from Jaipur. The building is existing in its complete form, but it lacks the grace of *South Gate*.

The tomb stands in the middle of a platform, originally paved with stones. Externally it is 60′ square with octagonal domed corner minars. The facade shows three entrances, the central one larger than others. The main entrance is a four-centred stilted arched opening under a half-dome, and set within a projected mass, bordered by slender fluted minarets. The side-doorways are simple flat-arched openings under a semi-dome, with an additional arched window above. The wall and the towers are relieved with panels. Underneath the parapet runs the horizontal cornice band, slightly raised at the centre. On the roof is the copper dome, slightly bulbous, sitting on an octagonal drum. It has beautiful lotus finial, which was once gilt. The interior falls into nine divisions--a central tomb chamber, 19′ 2″ square, four corner rooms, 10′ 3½″ each side, and four rectangular passages, each 24′ 8½″ by 10′ 8½.″

There are four doorways to enter the tomb chamber, but three are closed with marble screens, and that on the south is fitted with sandal wood door leaf bearing a beautiful design of Chinese Cross. The walls of the tomb chamber are faced with white marble, which is panelled in black lines, and the floor is laid out in a small pattern of the same material. In the centre lies the marble cenotaph, formed of three steps. The faces of the steps are relieved with foliaged design, but the cutting is shallow. Curiously the roof is built throughout in the old Hindu fashion of overlapping layers of stone, forming a simple straight-lined octagonal pyramid, which is crowned on the top with a copper dome, already mentioned.

The passage rooms are also faced with marble to a certain height, while the corner rooms had originally glazed tiles (now completely gone and replaced by white wash). Cunningham informs that the colours of the panels were dark-blue, orange, green, and purple on a yellow ground. These rooms are roofed in the same overlapping fashion. In the south-east corner room lies buried Shamshad Begam, some relative of Bibi Pari, while on the platform, to the south of the tomb, can be seen the graves of Sar Buland Khan, son of Haq Bande Khan, son of Khuda Bande Khan, who was son of Shaista Khan[1] (see above p. 71.).

The idea of dividing the interior of a tomb into a number of rooms is, no doubt, derived from the system followed in the *Tajmahal* and the *Mausoleum of Humayun*, and probably the use of marble is also inspired from the same source. But the tomb of Bibi Pari, though a splendid achievement in Bengal, can hardly stand comparison with them. Lavish expenditure was incurred for the erection of this tomb, but there is little touch of grace in its architectural setting.

12. *Farrukh Siyar's Mosque*

The mosque is situated to the south of the Southern Gate of Lalbagh fort. It was built by Prince (afterwards Emperor) Farrukh Siyar, during the time he acted as the representative of his father Prince Azim ush-Shan at Dacca (see above pp. 49-50).

The mosque is a spacious building, measuring 164′ by 54′, one of the largest mosque in Dacca. But it is of little

1. Habibur Rahman, *Asudgan-i-Dhaka*, p. 95, wrongly calls him grandson.

architectural beauty. It was originally roofed with wood and planks, but after its collapse the present masonry roof was constructed by Nawab Sir Abdul Ghani Bahadur of Dacca about eighty years ago.[1] A new minar for the purpose of *azan* (call to prayer) has now been added. This is a typical minar, the like of which we find in most of the mosques here.

13. *Khan Muhammad Mirdha's Mosque* (*pl. IX*)

The mosque is situated in *mahalla* Atish-Khana, and can be approached by the road going westward from Lal Bagh. This mosque illustrates the elaborate style of the Post-Shaista Khani Period. An inscription over the central doorway informs that it was built in 1116 A. H. (A. D. 1704) by Khan Muhammad Mirdha under the order of Qazi Ibadullah.[2] It is standing on a platfrom, 16½′ high, underneath which are vaulted rooms. The mosque proper is smaller, being only 48′ long by 24′ wide, with corner minars elaborately hightened above the parapet and terminating in a ribbed cupola. On the east are three entrances, each under a half-dome with bordering minarets. The wall is profusely panelled. There are further pilaster minarets bordering the doorways on the north and south and the projections of the three mihrabs on back of the west wall. Above the battlemented cresting rise three domes—central one bigger than others—each resting on ornamented octagonal drum. The interior has three bays with three decorated mihrabs on the west.

On the same platform, to the north-east of the mosque, stands a building, which answers for a small madrassa,

1. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, p. 11.
2. *Ibid*, p. 25.

generally meant for Qur'an instruction. It consists of a vaulted hall flanked by two square rooms. The main hall can be entered through three cusped arched openings, above which is a projected *chhajja*. This building follows the *qua* plan of the Muslim madrassa, which was so extensively used in Egypt during the Ayyubid and Mamluke periods (11th to 15th centuries A. D.).

Chauk Group of Monuments

In 1809 Charles D'Oyly wrote : "The Chauk or market-place of Dacca, is very ancient, and is situated in that quarter of the city which is now known by the name of the Old Nekaus. It was founded by Moorshed Ally Khan, and forms a square of about two hundred yards ; where fruits, vegetables, trinkets, toys, sweetmeats etc. are daily exposed for sale. At sunset the inhabitants assemble here in crowds."[1] In 1839 Dr. Taylor noted, "It is a square of pretty large dimensions, and is surrounded chiefly by mosques and shops. The open space, in which the bazar is held, is enclosed by a low wall, with a carriage road around it, and has in its centre, a large gun, which was found some years ago on the bank of the river."[2] "Moorshed Ally Khan," mentioned by D'Oyly, is a mistake for Murshid Quli Khan, who removed the capital from Dacca to Murshidabad. He built the Chauk in 1114 A.H. (A.D. 1702), according to an inscription.[3] But the Chauk, described by Taylor, was the work of Mr. Walters, some time Collector of Dacca. Even now the Chauk is a busy market place.

1. D'Oyly, *Antiquities of Dacca*, p. 13.
2. Taylor's *Topography of Dacca*. p. 87.
3. Habibur Rahman, *Asudgan-i-Dhaka*, p. 61, where he wrongly says that it was built by Murshid Quli II.

14. *Chauk Mosque*

The mosque is situated to the west of the Chauk. An inscription over the central doorway of the original building informs that it was built by Nawab Shaista Khan in 1086 A.H. (A. D. 1676). It is built in the Shaista Khani Style of architecture, and stands out most prominently in the Chauk.

The mosque stands on a high platform, 10 feet high and 94′ by 80′ in dimension. Underneath the platform are rooms, let out to shopkeepers, yielding sufficient income to keep it in good repairs. This income has also enabled the care-takers to make elaborate extensions to the mosque on the east and south. The original mosque measures 53′ by 26′ and is surmounted by three domes. The eastern facade has panel decorations, and the central doorway, as usual, is set in a projected fronton. The usual corner minars and the minarets in between further add to the embellishment. The interior hall has been completely renewed. The mihrabs are now studded with lustral pieces of enamel, and the floor is laid with marble.

15 *Churihatta Mosque*

The mosque is situated in the Churihatta quarter of the city near the *Chauk*. A lane by the north-side of the *Chauk* mosque leads to it, but a motorable road comes from the Urdu Road, just from the south-west corner of the Jail.

The mosque was constructed by a Mughal officer Muhammad Beg in 1649 when Prince Shah Shuja was the viceroy of Bengal. Tradition says that the mosque stands on the site of a former temple, which was destroyed and

this fact receives partial confirmation from the inscription.[1] But the present building was decidedly not a temple, as the rumour goes. It is out and out a mosque. The eastern facade of the original mosque is panelled and each of the three doorways opens through two successive arches, pointed and four-centred. The parapet is faced with blind merlons and the corners have the usual minars. The interior has three mihrabs on the west and a row of rectangular panels above the head line. Side doorways admit light. A modern verandah has been added on the east, and another will be soon added on the north.

16. *Kar Talab Khan's Mosque* (*Pl. VIII*)

The mosque is situated on the Begambazar Road, and can be approached from the Jail, or from the Chauk side. Kar Talab Khan was the title of Murshid Quli Khan, who removed the seat of government from Dacca to Murshidabad. During his residence in Dacca between A. D. 1700-1704, he built this mosque.[2] It displays the elaborate style developed in the post-Shaista Khani period.

The mosque stands on a raised platform, underneath which are vaulted rooms, now used as shops. A flight of steps, on the east, leads upto the mosque. A modern entrance with a hollow minar for *azan* (call to prayer) has now been built. The mosque is interesting in many

1. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, pp. 29-32.
2. Rahman Ali, *Tawarikh-i-Dhaka*, p. 266. There is an *arzee* of Ladly Begam, daughter of Sarfaraz Khan and grand-daughter of Shujauddaula, in *Dacca Appendix*, no. 5, in which she says that the mosque was built by Kartalab Khan, *alias* Murshid Quli, before he went to Murshidabad and that a fish market was allotted for its support, but in June-July 1777 some quarrel started as the market was destroyed by Tafazzal Ali. *The Patna, Dacca and Cossijurah Appendix*, 1777-79.

respects. Firstly, the earlier type of the three domed mosque has here been elaborated into a five-domed building. Secondly, to its north side is attached a Bangla roofed room, the pent eves of which are pronouncedly curved and drooping—a shape which resembles the Bengali type of *dochala* hut roof. This room is not a tomb, as R. D. Banerji thought,[1] but is meant for the *Imam's* residence. Thirdly, to the east of the mosque is an old stepped well (*baoli*) built about the same time. It is the only well of its kind in Bengal, but in North India it was quite common in Muslim period.

The mosque proper has five elaborate arched doorways on the east, each under a half-dome and flanked by slender pilaster-minarets, the pinnacle of which rises above the ornamented parapet. On the back side of the west wall the mihrab projections are also bordered by minarets. The domes, which rest on ornamented octagonal drums, are crowned with lotus finials. The interior hall is divided into five bays, each having a decorated mihrab on the west and an ornamented domed ceiling. This over-emphasis on decoration as well as elaboration of the architectural elements do not add at all to the beauty of the mosque. They only make for richness in detail. Very recently an ugly verandah has been added on the eastern side.

17. *Mazar of Dudhu Mian*

The *mazar*, or the grave, is lying in a narrow lane off Bangsal Road, about fifty yards from the Mahaot-toli crossing. Dudhu Mian, originally named as Muhammad Mohsin, was the son of Haji Shariatullah, the founder of *Fara'izi* movement in Bengal in the last century. Dudhu

1. *An. Rep. A, S. I.* 192425, p. 98.

Mian was born in 1819, and he died on 24th September, 1860 in Dacca and was buried at this place,[1] where originally stood Dudhu Mian Dalan (See map no. 4). He carried the mission of his father ahead and had great success in organising the peasants of the lower districts of Bengal.

The grave is flush with the ground, and is preserved in a small rectangular enclosure to which two doorways provide entrance. The enclosure is made of brick and plaster over which white wash is applied. It has a screen made of leafy designs cut in plaster. The doorways are poor imitation of rectangular door-frames with some off-sets added for variety.

The grave complex is today encumbered by high buildings on all four sides.

18. *Sitara Mosque* (*See Frontispiece*)
(*Mosque of Mirza Ghulam Pir*)

This is the most highly decorated mosque in Dacca, standing not far from Mahaot-toli crossing in Abul Khairat Lane just by the side of Armanitola High School. As originally built, the mosque was a simple construction with no decoration at all. The back of the mosque still preserves the original features. Within the last forty years the new *mutawalli* Ali Jan Bepari, a local dealer in soap and tobacco, has added a new verandah to the mosque on the east and spent lavishly in importing Japanese and English decorated China clay tiles to improve the inner and outer show of the mosque.

1. In *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st edition (see under *Fara'idiya*) and also in H. A. R. Gibb, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, 1953, the burial place is wrongly given as Bahadurpur in Faridpur district.

Originally it was known as *mosque of Mirza Ghulam Pir* who built the mosque in the early part of the 18th century. The new decorations, in which *sitara* (stars) play an important part, have led to the modern name *Sitara Mosque*. The original mosque was built in a typically Mughal style—a rectangular structure, about 33′ by 11′ (internal measurement), with corner towers at the four ends, three dorways on the east and one each on the north and south, and three mihrabs on the west. The front doors have now lost their panelled face and bordering turrets, but the back of the western wall retains the projection of the mihrabs, each one of them is bounded by slender turrets shooting above the horizontal parapet. Similarly the corner towers on the back side still show the plastered kiosks perched on them. The inner hall is covered over with three domes, the central one is bigger than the side ones. The use of the intermediate half-dome reduces the width of the side space and helps in building smaller domes at the sides. All the domes retain the original features internally, and have a basal frieze of sunk panels bearing multi-cusped arches. The apex shows a rosette in blue colour.

The new decorations fall into two parts. The outer decoration of the domes and the front facade is done by cut white China pieces which are embedded in white plaster with a variation of colour here and there and numerous stars spread over the surface. Right at the top of the eastern face can be seen a crescent with a star in the middle. The interior decoration of the mosque is done by rectangular tiles of variegated colour forming different designs, though cut pieces are again used here above a certain height to save money. The interior designs centre round three mihrabs and doorways, each one of which is framed within a rectangular decoration above a certain height, below which goes all round a long register

showing twin roses in each tile. Right at the bottom is a dado with peak motiff and chain festoon. At each of the corbelled pendentives can be seen a decorated flower vase with plants shooting upward. Similar decoration can be seen at the apex of the mihrab arches. The interior of the new verandah repeats the inner decoration at the lower stage with an addition of long floral ornament over a flower vase in some places. In between the door the wall surface shows the Japanese *Fujiyama* motif and other kinds of decorated vases. On the whole the colour is very glittering and at once attracts the visitor's eye.

19. *Armanitola's Mosque*

The mosque is situated on the main Sarachchandra Chakravarti Road, not far from *Sitara Mosque.* It is an unassuming small mosque, the back-side of which can be seen from the road-side. According to the inscription hung up over the central doorway, it was erected in 1735 by the wife of Khan Jani. The mosque is covered by the north Indian type of Bungalow roof.

20. *Husaini Dalan (pl. XV)*

We now come back to the Jail and follow Sir Nazimuddin Road and come towards Ramna side. On way, before the Railway crossing, a pathway called Husaini Dalan Road goes towards the west. It leads to Husaini Dalan, the famous *Imambara* (religious monument) of the Shiah community of the Muslims. We enter into the walled compound through a grand portal. In the centre stands the *Dalan* on the northern bank of a tank. The *muharram* is celebrated here annually with great eclat (for Muharram celebration see above pp. 88-95).

A lot of controversy has been raised over the date of its erection. Hakim Habibur Rahman repudiates the date

1052 A. H. (A. D. 1642), supplied by a reddish sandstone inscription fixed on the east wall of the main building, and rightly believes that the inscription is spurious.[1] He does not regard Mir Murad as the builder of this *Imambara*. According to him a small *tazia-khana* was in existence from an unknown date, and Nawab Nasrat Jang (died in A. D. 1823) erected the present magnificent building, to which later repairs were executed by Nawab Sir Ahsanullah after the earth-quake of 1897. Charles D'Oyly, when he made his sketches in 1808, drew the picture of the Chauk Mosque and wrote, "The stately mosque which appears beyond the market, is the principal place of worship of the present Nawaub, who is a devout Mussulman. It was built in the year 1676, and is called the HOSSEINEE DALAN."[2] Here D'Oyly has decidedly mistaken the Chauk mosque for Husaini Dalan, the picture of the latter he has not given at all. In 1832 Dr. Taylor wrote, "The principal Mahommedan places of worship are the Edgah and Hossainee Delaun......the latter is said to have been built by a person named Mir Murad, who held the Darogahship of the Nawarrah Mehals, and had charge of the public buildings in the time of Sultan Muhammad Azam. The tradition regarding the latter edifice is, that Mir Murad saw in a vision, Emam Hossain erecting a Taziah Khannah or house of mourning, and that he was induced in consequence to raise the present building, which he named Hossainee Delaun. He defrayed the expense of illuminating it during the Mohurrum, and of feeding the poor at this festival, and the allowance then established by him was continued by the Governors of this province. The annual sum of Rs. 2,500/- is at present given by the Government

1. Habibur Rahman, *Asudgan-i-Dhaka*, pp. 142—145
2. D'Oyly, *Antiquities of Dacca*, p. 13

to the Nawaub for the same purpose."[1] D'Oyly was a contemporary of Nasrat Jang and Taylor came a little later. None of them speaks of Nasrat Jang having built the Husaini Dalan. Therefore, the contention of Hakim Habibur Rahman cannot be accepted. Some construction must have been made by Mir Murad, though his date is not certain. Taylor places him in the time of Muhammad Azam, i. e. 1678—79, while the date of his death, according to an inscription found here is 1131 A. H. (A. D. 1718). What was the form of the original building cannot be ascertained now, because no one has described it. The local tradition says that Nawab Jasarat Khan rebuilt the Husaini Dalan in the second half of 18th century, and its features, noted by Hakim Habibur Rahman, support it.

The present building stands on a high platform, underneath which are rooms, containing some graves. A flight of steps on the east leads up to the floor. It consists of the main central *dalan* (rectangular hall), containing a little pond in the centre, with verandahs to the north and south and a series of three rooms on the east and west. The side-rooms, excepting the northernmost ones, have galleries in the second storey. An additional verandah has been added to the north side. The southern facade presents an attractive appearance. A screen of arches (now replaced by modern pillars supporting a long beam) is flanked by octagonal chambers in three stages each stage being marked by projected eves, and the facets pierced with windows, while their tops are crowned with domes. The parapet is decorated with blind merlons, and has pillared kiosks at the four corner tops. The interior presents a modern outlook, and it is difficult to say how much of it is old.

In one building lie buried the last Naib Nazims of Dacca.

1. Taylor's *Topography of Dacca*, pp. 90—91.

21. *Bara Katra (pl. XIV)*

Bara Katra is situated to the south of the Chauk, very near the river Buriganga, which formerly washed its foot. It is a magnificent building of grand scale, and is one of the most important remains of the Mughal period in Dacca. It is of the type of *Katra* building (enclosed quadrangle) with a gigantic frontage towards the river. It served the purpose of a caravan serai. Aulad Hasan reports two inscriptions belonging to it. The one lavishes high praise on this lofty structure and states that its foundation was laid by Abul Qasim in 1053 A. H. (A. D. 1644). The second reads : "Sultan Shah Shuja Bahadur was famed for deeds of charity—wherefore being hopeful of the mercy of God his slave Abul Qasim al-Husaini, al-Tabtaba, as-Simnani, built this sacred edifice endowing it with twenty-two shops attached to it, on the rightful and lawful condition that the officials in charge of the endowment should expend the income derived from them upon the repairs of the buildings and upon the poor, and that they should not take any rent from any deserving person alighting there in, so that the pious act may reflect upon the monarch in this world and they should not act contrariwise, or else they would be called to account on the Day of Retribution. The inscription was composed by Sad ud-Din Muhammad Sherazi, 1055 A H. (A. D. 1646)."[1]

Bara Katra is now in ruins. Its northern wing has completely disappeared. The eastern and western sides are preserved to some extent, while the southern row is still existing in its complete form. But new buildings have been erected in the central courtyard, and alterations have been made in the existing structure. The idea of its original

1. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, p. 15

plan can be gathered from Rennell's map. It appears to have consisted of an open quadrangle, enclosed on four sides with arcaded rooms, with main entrance on the north and the south. The southern wing presents a magnificent river frontage, 223 feet long, and in its prime glory it must have been an object of great attraction to the visitors coming on boat from afar along the river Buriganga. This wing consists of a lofty three-storeyed gateway in the middle, flanked on either side with two-storeyed structures and ending at the two corners with octagonal hollow towers in three storeys. The flanking structures have smaller arched entrances below and residential rooms with window openings towards the river above. The main gateway is prominently projected, and forms a tall fronton bordered with minarets. Externally, a high half-domed arch is carried up to the top of the second storey, the underside of the half-dome being decorated with plastered network. Above the apex of the arch open the windows of the third storey, while along the vertical sides plastered panels show a variety of forms including four-centred, cusped, horse-shoe, and flat arches,—between which doorways open into guard rooms. From here we are led into an octagonal domed chamber, 27′ 3″ in diameter, the ceiling of which is neatly plastered and decorated with net-pattern as well as foliaged design of an elaborate kind. Traces of original application of colour are also found. The structures, flanking the gateway, were originally decorated with rows of blind merlons in order to demarcate the two stages. The subsidiary arched entrances in the ground-floor open into long barrel-vaulted passages. The corner towers show panelled decoration in the faces of the two lower stages, while the third has window openings. From the courtyard side two flights of steps, one on either side of the gateway, lead up to the second storey. Here we have a row of oblong rooms, faced with a continuous

verandah on the north. The third storey over the main gateway has also a similar room and verandah. These upper storeys were probably reserved for visitors of high personage.

On the whole the monument is very strongly built of plastered brick-work with elaborate arrangements for comfort and living, and the builder had every right to declare :

> "To this lofty building which proppeth high heaven
> By this slave Abul Qasim foundation was given.
> What a building ! It putteth high heaven to shame ;
> A copy of Paradise ye might it name."

But to-day the old glory has been lost in the over-crowded and unsightly huts and shops, and in the uncouth habits of the indigent that find shelter in the dark chambers and dirty niches. Man, in his neglect, has forgotten the value of magnificence that is his heritage.

22. *Chota Katra*

Chota Katra is situated about 200 yards east of Bara Katra, from where it can be approached by a by-lane. From Mitford Road we can also go to Chota Katra by Hakim Habibur Rahman lane.

Chota Katra was built in A. D. 1663 by Nawab Shaista Khan probably along with his great building project, which also included a palace, a mosque, a great *band*, called *Poshta*, along the Buriganga, which extended from Mitford Hospital to Lalbagh.[1] This Katra is of similar

1. Habibur Rahman, *Asudgan-i-Dhaka*, p. 63 ; Rahman Ali, *Tawarikh-i-Dhaka*, p. 269

plan and purpose as the *Bara Katra*, but it is smaller in size, and has suffered much owing to neglect and later repairs. Its two gateways, however altered, are still in existence. That on the river side is three-storeyed, and the frontal arch is carried to the top of the second storey. The triple windows on the third storey and the crowning minarets are all modern, and so is the parapet. On the back side a new porch has been erected. The second gate is double-storeyed, and displays same features. Most of the rooms on the right and left wings are in existence, but the open courtyard in the centre is so overcrowded with merchants' godowns that nothing of the original grandeur can be visualised.

23. *Tomb of Bibi Champa*

In the courtyard of the *Chota Katra* stands an old single-domed square tomb, measuring 24 feet each side, of plastered brick-work. Its arched doorways on the four sides are flanked with graceful tapering minarets, standing upon inverted jars, while the dome is resting on battlemented octagonal drum. The grave in the interior has been levelled down to the ground. Aulad Hasan informs that the tomb is "said to have been built by the Amir-ul-Umara Shaista Khan over the graves of Bibi Champa, after whom the quarter is called Champatoli."[1] Hakim Habibur Rahman notes the local tradition that Bibi Champa was a concubine of Nawab Shaista Khan, and he refutes the assertion of Rankin that she was his daughter.[2]

1. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, p. 16.
2. Habibur Rahman, *Asudgan-i-Dhaka*, pp. 56-57.

24. *Nawab Shaista Khan's Mosque*

The mosque is situated on the bank of the river Buriganga behind the Mitford Hospital (to the west of the Superintendent's quarter), and can be approached from the Mitford Road by a lane passing between the hospital and the Medical School and going to the *Pacca Ghat*, where one can also land by boat. According to an inscription over the central doorway, the mosque was built by Nawab Shaista Khan, but the year of its construction is lost. It must have been built during his first governorship, when he also erected a palace in this area. The present building is completely devoid of Shaista Khani features. It is said that the whole mosque was enveloped in fire,[1] and the present restoration has been done by public works department, who have got the least idea of the history of architecture. The mosque is of the usual three-domed type with corner *minars*. The arched entrances open under semi-domes. The battlemented drums, on which the domes rest, still retain their old style.

25. *Tomb and Mosque of Amiruddin*

These are situated in a walled compound on the bank of the river Buriganga, and can be approached by a lane going from Babubazar Road, just east of the Babubazar bridge. The mosque was built by Darogha Amiruddin, who was in the service of East India Company in early 19th century A. D. The mosque, with its three domes, panelled facade and number of minarets, has beautifully copied the post-Shaista Khani style, and presents a fine view from the river-side. To this mosque a verandah was added in 1911. In the neighbouring single-domed square tomb the builder lies buried.

1. Aulad Hasan, *Notes* p. 22.

26. *Islam Khan ki Masjid*

This mosque is situated in Sayid Aulad Hasan Lane, formerly called Ashiq Jamadar lane, and it can be approached from Islampur Road. According to the local tradition, it was built by Islam Khan, the first Mughal Governor of Dacca.[1] It is a three-domed mosque, with its central dome much bigger than others. The facade and the corner minars are undecorated. The doorways are simple arched entrance without any attempt for embellishment. This simplicity of the mosque speaks of its Pre-Shaista Khani style. Recently it has been extensively repaired.

27. *Mosque in Nava Rai Lane* (*Islampur*)

The mosque is situated in Nava Rai Lane (formerly Prostitutes' Quarter), which can be approached either from Islampur Road or from Tantibazar. It stands on a high plinth, where is also a well in one corner. The facade is panelled, each panel containing ogee arches. The central doorway has multi-cusped arch, while those of the side are trefoil. The parapet seems to be a new construction as the merlons are of a degenerate type. The interior has three mehrabs on the west, and is further decorated with panels. A new verandah has been added on the east. The builder's name is not known. The style is of early 17th century, but the actual date of its erection can not be given.

28. *The Tomb of Shah Muhammad Jamal*

It is situated in Tantibazar, and the Kotwali Road starting from Kotwali Police Chauki in Patuatoli leads to it.

1. Rahman Ali, *Tawarikh-i-Dhaka*, p. 253.

The tomb stands in a walled compound which includes a single-domed square mosque, now much added, aboul 100 years old, and a *Madrassa*, now completely destroyed. The person buried inside is Shah Muhammad Jamal, whose great devotee, Shaikh Muhammad Zakir, constructed it in the last century.[1]

Old Town Monuments

The Old Town represents Pre-Mughal Dacca, the boundary of which has been given earlier.[2] Here we are noting a few important relics associated with antiquity or important personages of old.

29. *Binat Bibi's Mosque*

Binat Bibi's Mosque is situated in Narinda, and can be approached either from Sutrapur Police Station, or from Baldha Museum in Wari. It lies to the north of the Narinda bridge.

According to the inscription hung over the central doorway, it was built by Bakht Binat, daughter of Marhamat in A. D. 1457.[3]

This is the earliest existing mosque in Dacca, but later repairs have altered many of its pre-Mughal features. Originally, it was an unplastered single-domed building, with octagonal corner minars, curved battlements, and cornice, and simple arched openings on three sides. The mihrab had a projection at the back of the west wall. The dome is still semi-circular, and rests directly on the roof, with

1. Habibur Rahman, *Asudgan-i-Dhaka*, pp. 21-23.
2. See above pp. 24-27.
3. See above pp. 20-21.

only a ring of extra plaster applied at the base in order to make it water-tight. But now the walls are plastered the earlier parapet straightened, another domed room is added to its south, and a new verandah given on the east and south. Even then the north and west facades, and the first dome give an idea of its antique character.

There is now a proposal to demolish the old dome and erect another storey over it. This scheme is meant to accommodate larger number of people in the mosque than is now possible. In spite of my persuation the people in the locality are adamant in their resolve, and probably by the time this book is out in print, the oldest existing monument in Dacca will have lost its character and shape. The antiquity has again lost its battle in Dacca.

30. *Narinda bridge*

It was originally a single-arched brick-built bridge with cut-waters on either side. It was erected by Hayat Bepari, a tradesman of Narinda, in 1074 A. H. (A. D. 1664).[1] But now the arch has collapsed, and iron girders have been put in its place. It is one of the ten bridges that span the Dulai Khal in Dacca.

31. *Hayat Bepari's Mosque*

This mosque lies to the south of the Narinda bridge, and was built by the same merchant, Hayat Bepari, in A. D. 1664. It is also a single-domed square mosque, and in style tries to copy Binat Bibi's mosque. But now the whole mosque has been re-modelled.

1. Rahman Ali, *Tawarikh-i-Dhaka*, p. 254.

32. *Ghulam Muhammad's Gateway*

Shaikh Ghulam Muhammad was the third son of Shaikh Ghulam Nabi, a famous zamindar in the time of Nawab Jasarat Khan. He was also an agent to the Portuguese factory at Dacca.[1] Both father and son are well known for their repair works to the Qadam Rasul Building at Nabigunj, opposite Narayangunj. Ghulam Muhammad, after the death of his father, purchased the Portuguese residence at Sangat Tola and erected his own house.[2] The walls made of old jaffary bricks still recall the ancient character of this locality.

From Lakshmibazar a lane (motorable) leads towards this old locality. A lofty, plastered brick gateway is the only structure left worth seeing. But it is now encumbered with modern buildings on its right and left. Fortunately, two old wooden door-leaves, showing crossed and square designs, are still found on the spot. The gateway is a two-storied structure, the upper storey having been remodelled in recent time. The lower opens through three successive cusped arches. Between the first and second arches is a small vestibule, and then comes the main gate-room, the roof of which is flat and supported on wooden girders and rafters.

In this building an attempt has been made to copy the designs of the *Chota Katra* Gate.

33. *Bibi Mehar's Mosque*

A little way south-east of this Gate is a single-domed square mosque, the dome of which, having fallen, is renewed

1. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, P. 26.
2. Rahman Ali, *Tawarikh-i-Dhaka*, pp. 193-195.

with a flat roof. According to the inscription, hung up over the central doorway, it was built by Bibi Mehar, some relative of Ghulam Muhammad, in 1230 A. H. (A. D. 1814). The mosque is of the usual type, having three small doorways on the east, and three small mihrabs on the west.

34. *Guru Tegh Bahadur's Sangat*

Going still further by this Sangat-tola lane, about 100 yards, we arrive at Guru Tegh Bahadur's *Sangat*. The mahalla is called Sangat-tola after the name of this establishment. The Sangat is located in a two-storeyed rectangular building, but the eastern side is rounded off so as to give the shape of an apse. This feature is probably dictated by the site and has no particular importance. The present building is absolutely new, hardly fifty years old. Another small room to the west of this building is shown, where, it is pointed out, Guru Tegh Bahadur stayed. At present the rooms in the ground-floor have been let out to a Hindu Vakeel. The real *Sangat* is to be found in the second storey, where one room has been properly set and well kept up by an old lady, papularly called *Sikhir Ma* (Sikh's mother), who is left behind by her co-religionists to keep aflame the torch of Sikhism in this far off land of East Pakistan. The lady, in her dismal sorrow, deserves our sympathy for her great enthusiasm and love of devotion.

The story of Guru Tegh Bahadur's visit is told in the words of Guru Bakhsh Singh : "The importunities of the poor devotees who could not travel all the way to the Punjab for a pilgrimage became so great and pronounced that the ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur, the father of Guru Gobind Singh, at last decided to accede to their wishes. The opposition that his succession to the gaddi had met

and the consequent jealousy and enmity also prompted him to leave the Punjab for some time. The news sent a thrill of joy through the devoted hearts and such was the enthusiasm evoked that preparation began to be made to receive the Holy personage long before he started on his mission in 1665. At Patna a short halt was made, during the course of which, to the Guru's own wishes to see the Sikhs of Bengal was added the earnest prayer of a Rajput Commander (Raja Subal Singh Sesodia, a commander of 1500) ordered to proceed with an expedition against Chittagong. The Guru left his family at Patna and accompanied the Raja to Dacca. He had not been there long, when the news of the birth of Gobinda Singh reached him. On his arrival at Dacca the Guru found his way to the Sangat in the town ; Masand Bulaki, now informed all the Sikhs of the Guru's arrival. They came in crowds to do him honour and receive his instruction and benedictions. Such was the enthusiasm displayed that the Guru declared that Dhaka was 'the store house of his faith' ; when the Guru was about to depart Masand Bulaki's mother had a picture of the Guru painted. This picture together with some pieces of the *Chawki*, she had got prepared for Guru to sit on, are still preserved in the Sangat. This picture, even if not contemporary, is certainly very old.

"But these are not the only things to interest us here......For, herein are preserved, half a dozen old letters, some of which are in the handwriting of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh ; a copy of Granth Sahib made in Sambat 1732 A. D. i. e. to say the earliest and the first complete copy known ; a beautifully illuminated copy in bold type and made about Nawab Serajuddoula's time, and some other books differing considerably from printed editions of them that are available now. The books also contain some important historical data."[1]

1. *Dacca Review*, Vol. V, 1915, pp. 228-229.

All these books have been well kept up here. The paintings are also here. The visitor can see all of them and admire the perseverance of the lady.

35. *Sitara Begam's Mosque in Singtola*

Going eastward from this lane, we arrive at a little crossing of four lanes. Proceeding still further east and then on turning to the south we reach Singtola where is located Sitara Begam's Mosque.

Sitara Begam was the wife of Ghulam Muhammad. She erected this mosque to commemorate the death of her husband in 1231 A. H. (A. D. 1819)—a date supplied by an inscription over the central doorway. The mosque stands on the western side of an embanked earth, and has a beautifully variegated facade. The line of its white-plastered wall is varied by a centrally projected surface, bordered by two octagonal minarets, and broken through in the middle by an arched entrance under a cusped semi-dome. A frame of rectangular panels further adds to the beauty. The side arched doorways, which make up the triple entrance of the Mughal style, are smaller and have single pilasters on either side. The parapet is enlivened with a row of blind merlons, behind which rise three bulbous domes, the central one being bigger than others. Each of them is resting on stumpy octagonal drum, and has merlons as basal ornament. The interior is a single neat hall. In short, the mosque faithfully copies post-Shaista Khani style of architecture. It has been recently repaired.

36. *Raja Babu's House and the Temple of Lakshmi Narayana in Lakshmi Bazar*

From Singtola we can wend our way and arrive at

Raja Babu Ka Maidan, or from Lakshmibazar we can go to Raja Babu's House by Shyamaprasad Chaudhuri lane.

Raja Babu whose full name was Krishna Prasad, was the grand-son of Bhikan Lal Pande, a Gaur Brahmin who migrated from Panjab to Dacca in 18th century and served in the Diwani service of East India Company. He rendered meritorious service to the English during Plassey Battle (1757), and consequently received a hereditary reward of landed property and pension in the name of god Lakshmi-Narayana, which he installed in his house.[1]

The main building of Raja Babu's House stands at one end of a large open quadrangle, called *Raja Babu Ka Maidan*. In this open *maidan* was formerly celebrated the Hindu festival of Holi with great festivities and pompous show. The main building is two-storeyed, the lower portion of which consists of two rooms and a solid mass of brick-work, carried upto the first *sahn* to the *nach-ghar* (dancing hall). A wide flight of steps made of brick-on-edge leads up to the second storey. The *nach-ghar* is a spacious *baradari* with verandah in front and an inner apartment (*antarala*) behind. The floor is made up of wooden planks and the roof has been replaced with galvanised iron sheets. The most splendid object to be seen is the beautiful carving, fine and detailed, worked in plaster on the walls. In the *antarala* is a handsome *simhasana* (lion-throne) beautifully worked in wood plaited with silver. There the image of Lakshmi-Narayana is installed in the evening and on festive days. The image is usually kept in a modern temple.

1. Rahman Ali, *Tawarikh-i-Dhaka*, pp. 190—193 ; Roy's *Dhakar Itihasa*, Vol. I, pp. 379-80.

The name *nach-ghar* recalls its proper use as a dancing hall in the time of Raja Babu. The building is a good example of 18th century work—a harmonious blend of Hindu and Muslim elements. Today thousands of Hindus throng in the evening to pay their homage to the god.

37. *Temple of Jai-Kali*

This temple is situated in Thathari-Bazar, and can be approached from Nawabpur Road by Folder Street which goes from the southern side of the Railway crossing towards Wari.

This temple is about 200 to 250 years old.[1] Really speaking, there are two temples inside a walled compound. One is a single-spired temple with profuse decoration in plaster on the spire. The top of the square cella is marked with a curved projected eve crowned with blind merlons. The other temple is of the *panch-ratna* type (five spires on the top of a Bangla shaped building). The central spire is taller than those at the corners. The facade of the temple is relieved with tall rectangular panels. Inside, we have the image of Kali.

Dhanmandi Group of Monuments

Beyond Azimpura is the *Pilkhana*, where formerly royal elephants were kept. Further away stretch the green fields, where once stood the important extension of Mughal Dacca. Today here stand the modern buildings of Dhanmandi Residential area. The whole area is crossed longitudinally by two roads, Mirpur Road and Satmasjid Road, linked in between by cross-streets numbered from one to twenty seven. A small circuitous lake divides the buildings facing

1. Roy's *Dhakar Itihasa,* Vol. I, pp. 80—81.

the Mirpur Road from those on the Satmasjid Road. The *New Market* marks the beginning of these buildings.

38. *Mariam Saleha's Mosque*

This old mosque is standing in Babupara-Nilkhet area, lying on way to New Market to the right of the road immediately after the railway line. To the mosque is attached a grave-yard, in which the most important grave is of Shah Bagu Diwan *alias* Khaliqur Rahman. His son was Abdullah, and the latter's daughter was Mariam Saleha who built the mosque in A. H. 1118/A. D. 1706, according to an inscription tablet fixed over the central doorway on the eastern side.

The mosque is built of brick and plaster in the typical Mughal style. It is an oblong building, 39′ by 13′ (internal measurement) with octagonal towers at the four corners. Above the parapet the towers are circular having fluted cap on the top. The eastern face is panelled showing the projection of the surface at the centre which has the arched doorway opening under a half-dome. The parapet above is horizontal in the usual Mughal style and is faced with blind merlons. The roof is covered by three shouldered domes, the central one is bigger than its fellows —all crowned with lotus finials. The interior of the mosque is divided into three bays by lateral arches, the side bays being reduced in size as in the *Lalbagh Mosque* (see above pp. 184-85). The domes have internally basal ornament. All the three mihrabs are semi-octagonal. Today a new verandah has been added on the eastern side, the roof of which is clumsily built of reeds.

39. *Bengali Hut-Shaped Structure*

Within the *Pilhana* area, a little beyond New Market

we get another memorial of old—a little structure of the shape of a Bengali hut. This is easily approached from the back door of *Pilkhana* from Satmasjid Road. Built of brick and plaster, a small rectangular room is covered over with a double-sided pent roof (*do-chala*) with gable-ends at the sides and drooping eves in front and at the back. It is the transplantation in brick of a type of bamboo hut found in Bengal. It may be dated to 17th century A. D.

The structure is, at present, overgrown with bushes and jungles, and now stands within the military area.

40. *The Great Idgah*

On the Satmasjid Road between the 13th and 14th street lie the remains of an *Idgah* of plastered brick-work. From the road we see its back on our right. The inscription over the central mihrab informs that it was built by Mir Abul Qasim, the Diwan of Prince Shah Shuja, in 1050 A. H. (A. D. 1640).[1] The Idgah is usually a single-walled mosque, and does not call for any great architectural beauty, but the importance of the present structure lies in the fact that it is the earliest dated monument of the Mughal period in Dacca that betrays the influence of the Imperial Mughal style.

It consists of an open platform raised 4′ above the level of the surrounding country, and measuring 245′ by 137′, round which on the north, east and south sides, are the remains of a parapet, said formerly to have been 6′ high. The screen wall on the western side, about 15′ high contains, in the middle, a semi-octagonal mihrab with a four-centred stilted arch, decorated with multiple cusping

1. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, pp. 20—21 ; Rahman Ali, *Tawarikh-i-Dhaka*, p. 273.

applied to the outer face, and flanked on either side by multi-cusped arched panels within frames. Further beyond, on each side of the central mihrab, three subsidiary mihrabs consisting of simple wall arches, survive. The walls are then broken. Over the mihrab is a band of horizontal cornice, topped with battlemented cresting.

The *Idgah* has now been cleaned, and is regularly used for the annual prayers.

41. *Sikher Mandir and Guru Nanak's Well*

About half a mile beyond the Idgah we arrive at a cross-road, one road going northward to join the Mirpur Road. Here at a distance of about 50′ from the cross-road was the village of Sibpur. On the outskirts of this village lay Sikher Mandir and Guru Nanak's well. Today they are not traceable. The story of Guru Nanak's visit to this place is told in the words of Guru Bakhsh Singh :—

Guru Nanak "had left his home and travelled on foot with single companion through Hindustan and Bihar to Kamrup, visiting all the sacred places, Hindu and Muhammedan enroute. From Kamrup he turned his steps south and was on his way to the temples of Kali and Jagannath Puri. The temple of Dhakeswari, one of the most famous place of pilgrimage in olden times, lay on the way and was not simply to be passed by. Guru Nanak, therefore, broke his journey here and landed at the northern-most *ghat* at Rayer-bazar. The place was probably inhabited by poor people of potter class as at present ; for, it is among these people that the tradition of the Great Teacher's visit survives and a sort of devotion still lingers, though the memories have long since grown vague and dim. A well commemorates this visit to the present day. Out in the waste near Jafarabad, half hidden in bramble

growth a well and a heap or two of debris are the only visible signs of the Sikh monastery that once flourished here. To judge from the signs the temple originally consisted of a well and a small square building with arched doorway and a vaulted roof, to which were added later a tank and a *baradari* on the edge of this tank. The well is known as Guru Nanak's well and there is a local tradition that Guru Nanak drank from the well. The Sikh story, a little rationalised, is that he dug a hole for drinking water with his pointed stick. However that may be, the place became sacred in the eyes of the Sikhs, and Sikh ascetics soon followed to establish a monastery there.........Miraculous properties have been attributed to the water of the well ever since the visit of the Guru, and people from the villages in the neighbourhood gather together there once a year in the month of Chaitra for a picnic now, but perhaps continuing in howsoever changed a form, an annual fair and *yagya* held in connection with the Sangat."[1]

This story of Guru Nanak's visit is not corroborated by any authentic source. No fair is now held. The tank has now been turned into a field. The well, which measured 20′ in diameter and 30′ deep, was built of brick. Near it stood a small modern building,—a rectangular hall with a vaulted verandah.

42. *Dara Begam's Tomb* (*pl. XI*)

About half a mile away from Guru Nanak's well close to Muhammadpur Colony is the dilapidated tomb of Dara Begam.[2] It is about 2 furlongs north of the main road, and a foot-path leads up to it. The tomb stands on

1. *Dacca Review*, Vol. V, 1915, pp. 226—227.
2. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, pp. 32—33.

an elevated spot, which affords a splendid view of the landscape around.

The tomb is a unique building of its kind in Dacca, having the largest dome, 25′ in diameter, covering a square room, 27′ 7″ each side, to which a vaulted verandah, 13′ wide, is attached on the south. The southern facade, with its three cusped arched openings and sparsely panelled walls appears quite simple. The parapet has completely vanished. At the corners of the building there are six slender minarets. The verandah has niches in the walls and, on the top, flat vaulted roof. The interior of the hall is reached through three double engrailed arch-ways, one each on the north, east and south, the northern one having been closed. On the west is a semi-octagonal mihrab, near which a pulpit has been erected recently. The dome is carried on squinches, and has merlons as basal ornament.

The date of this building is not definitely known ; but the use of simple arched openings with no attempt to emphasise the central doorway and sparse decoration place it in the Pre-Shaista Khani period. It is also difficult to state the object of the building. No grave now exists inside, but the people in the locality speak of its destruction. The existence of a mihrab raises doubt on its being a tomb, because in Bengal we never see a mihrab inside a tomb as we get in Northern India. Who Dara Begam was, can not be definitely stated.

The building is now repaired, and some new features have been added in the interior. As there was no grave inside, the local people have taken it for a mosque and it is now used for prayer.

43. *Alakuri's Mosque at Muhammadpur* (*pl. XII*)

About half a mile from Dara Begam's tomb, on the left side of the road in Muhammadpur, where formerly

existed the village of Katajur, is a beautiful small mosque, showing Shaista Khani style of architecture. The mosque stands on the western side of a raised spot, to the south of which is a small old well. It is a single-domed square building, measuring 12½′ (internally) each side, with octagonal corner minars, crowned with plastered kiosks having pent eves. The eastern facade is very pleasing with its arched panels and a prominent arched opening set in a projected bay bordered by slender fluted pilaster minarets resting on double jar-pedestal. The doorway opens below a semi-dome over which was formerly placed an inscription. It is reported that the inscription was removed by the Raja of Bhowal in the last century. Behind the parapet, which is much broken, rises the dome. The interior hall is quite impressive with its decorated central mihrab, and the dome, which is supported on squinches, has basal leaf ornament above a frieze of floral design.

The mosque is now receiving the attention of the local people.

44. *Satgumbad Mosque* (*pl. I*)

About 50 yards away from Alakuri's Mosque lies the famous Satgumbad Mosque. It stands on the northern edge of a swampy pool, which formerly constituted the course of Buriganga river, now receded farther back to a mile distance. During the rains, on approaching in a boat along the river, the white plastered mosque presents a picturesque view. Tradition ascribes the building of this mosque to Nawab Shaista Khan,[1] and the graceful style that permeates through it suggests that it must have been constructed by about A. D. 1680.

1. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, p. 40.

A small modern gateway leads into the mosque compound. The mosque is an oblong structure, measuring 58′ long by 27′ wide externally, with hollow octagonal towers, 12′ wide, instead of the usual minars at each of the four corners. These towers are of two storeys, each storey having arched panels and windows, surmounted with *chhajja*, and are crowned by domes with lotus finials. The main facade has three entrances with four-centred arches, the middle entrance slightly larger than the others, all under higher arches with angular half domes. The central high arch is multi-cusped, while the flanking ones have cusped ornament applied to their outer faces. The central opening is set in a slightly projecting bay and bordered by circular ornamental minarets. The whole facade is panelled with niches, and is topped by a battlemented cresting, above a band of modern blue colouring. A similar cresting caps the two stages of the corner towers. The roof is covered with three domes which, with the four domes over the towers, give the name *Satgumbad* (locally pronounced Satgumbaz), "seven-domed" to the building. The domes—central one larger than the others—have a basal course of merlons, and terminate in lotus finials. Internally they are carried on pendentives, and as, on the outside, have a basal course of petals. On the west there are three mihrabs one in each bay ornamented with applied cuspings.

By the side of compound gate, on the right, is a modern grave of some *faqir*, who died about thirty years ago. Recently another grave of the former Mutawalli has been added. About 100 yards to the north-east from this mosque are the ruins of two brick-built tombs, which had formerly "basalt doorframes and marble *Jalis*,"[1] but now both the structures have fallen to the ground. Aulad Hasan

1. *Ibid*, p. 41.

notes the popular tradition that here lie buried two daughters of Shaista Khan.

Beyond the Satgumbad mosque stretches the wide expanse of the Burigana, which affords nice game birds in the rains and winter. A boat-trip onward gives the most pleasurable diversion that one can have in Dacca.

45. *Unknown Tombs* (*pl. XIII*)
Near Satgumbad Mosque

The tomb stands about 100 yards to the north-east of the *Satgumbad Mosque* near Muhammadpur Colony. The person buried is not known, but Aulad Hasan[1] surmises that it entombs one of the daughters of Shaista Khan. The tomb stands on an elevated spot and makes a perfect square from outside. The walls are very thick. The main entrance on the north opens under a high multi-cusped archway, which itself is contained within a projected bay bordered by slender turrets. The whole face is profusely panelled. The interior has its corners scooped out for squinch, thus giving it the shape of an octagon. Above the squinch rests the coping arch, which originally supported the flat vault, now fallen. The western side shows a mihrab and the other two openings, which originally had marble screens, are now closed. The building is now in a neglected condition.

On Way To Tejgaon

The present Mymensing Road, which leads to Tejgaon, is the old Mughal Trunk Road, constructed by Mir Jumla, and over which passed for number of years the Mughal cavalry towards the eastern frontier. The Tejgaon area was then occupied by European settlers. Here was to be

1. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, p. 41.

found the first English factory and garden on the site now occupied by Agricultural Farm. The Portuguese mission still continues in its old place (but now handed over to the Americans). The French garden lay on the right side of the road while the Dutch garden stretched on the left. (see map No. 3)

46. *Khwaja Ambar's Bridge*

The first monument that we meet on this road is Khwaja Ambar's bridge,—a little before the locality called Karwan. Khwaja Ambar was the head eunuch of Nawab Shaista Khan, and he built this bridge in A. D. 1680.[1]

The bridge spans the Iskatan Khal, and originally consisted of a single four-centred pointed arch, with flanking cut-waters. In the recent widening of the Mymensingh Road this bridge has completely been replaced.

47. *Khwaja Ambar's Mosque*

On going ahead we meet, on our right side, Khwaja Ambar's mosque at Karwan. It stands on a raised masonry platform built solidly of brick. A flight of steps on the east leads up to an arched gateway, having stone door-frame. On the right of the steps is a well excavated by Khwaja Ambar. The mosque has been recently repaired, and many alterations have been made. But its general features, with three domes, embellished facade, and a pleasing interior hall completely conform to the Shaista Khani style of architecture. The inscription, which is fixed over the central doorway, speaks of the erection of a mosque, a well and a bridge by Khwaja Ambar during the governorship of Shaista Khan. Another inscription over the mihrab is a verse from the

1. *Ibid*, p. 42.

Holy Qur'an. The most remarkable thing in this building is the use of stone at the mihrab, the pulpit and the arches. The stones are all black basalt, available in Bengal from Rajmahal hills.

To the north of this mosque is a table-tomb built of brick and mortar, where lies buried the builder.

48. *Tejgaon Church*

Tejgaon Church is the oldest existing church in Dacca. It belonged to the Portuguese Mission, the history of which has already been told.[1] Dr. Taylor writes: "The church of Tezgong, in the vicinity of Dacca, is said to have been founded by St. Augustine Missionaries prior to 1599, but it is probale from the close resemblance of this church to the Nestorian places of worship in the south of India, that it was originally built by the Christian merchants mentioned by Vertomannus, and that it was subsequently repaired or rebuilt by the Roman Catholic Missionaries."[2] This date and the remark given by Dr. Taylor do not conform to the history that has been given earlier by us.

The church, which was originally built in A. D. 1677, has undergone repairs a number of times, the last being in 1940. It consists of a long rectangular hall, containg all the requirements of a basilican church with its nave and aisle, the narthex and the bema, except the apse which makes here a small square. The old wooden roof has been completely replaced by a modern one, the support still being the earlier circular brick columns, which were probably put here subsequent to 1677. On the eastern side the corners have hollow minars, capped cupolas, originally having images. The eastern facade is a harmonious blend

1. See above pp 35 and 41.
2. Taylor'y *Topography of Dacca*, p. 251.

of Christian and Mughal elements. The cusped arched entrance flanked with twin fluted pillars, the panelled face, and the deeply curved projected eve recall the Shaista Khani style of architecture. But the gable-end with its triangular pediment, containing the figure of Mary with a babe, and the pillars having zigzag pattern are absolutely Christian. The gable-end suggests that probably in the original building the roof was triangular in section, but now we have flat roof.

49. *Tongi Bridge*

This bridge spanned the Tongi river, which crosses the Dacca-Mymensingh Road at the 14th mile. It was a beautiful structure like the Pagla Pul, but now is completely in ruins. It was also built by Mir Jumla.

CHAPTER IX

MODERN MONUMENTS IN DACCA

Introduction : In this chapter a description of select monuments, built during the period of the British rule and after independence since 1947 is attempted so as to give an idea of the new architectural developments that took place in Dacca. In the religious buildings, like mosques and tombs, we do not find any significant change in the style, though new building materials facilitated in the evolution of simple flat roof and gave a new sky line to the monuments. The first of its kind is seen in *Farrukh Siyar's mosque* (above p. 187) and *Husaini Dalan* (above pp195-97), where we notice the flat roof resting directly on long girders (iron or wooden). This system was introduced in the very first building erected by the British—the *Nimtali Gate* in the present Dacca Museum compound, but this did not affect the Mughal style of gate except that the old grace and charm are not seen in the new building. This system of roofing has been used very widely in the expansion of the old mosques. The newly added verandahs in almost all the old mosques follow this system. But completely European types of buildings are first seen in the churches now existing in Dacca, and gradually the secular buildings came under their influence. The Dutch *Kothis* (residential house) introduced here a new type of private house. It consists of a central big hall with a verandah in the front and back and two or three rooms on the sides,—the front rooms, which occupy a part of the verandah, are a development from a semi-octagonal or

round tower. A few such buildings[1] are still standing in Wiseghat locality of Dacca. Another type of building can be seen in the rounded corners of the State Bank Building with its tall Doric columns. Still more important are the new elements seen in almost all the houses of the 19th century, like the semi-circular arch, pillars with Corinthian capitals, and other foliaged designs in plaster. Of the typical buildings in the European style mention may be made of the *Ahsan Manzil*, the old Government House (modern High Court Building), *Greek memorial*, and an insignificant monument (apparently double-storied but actually single-storied) in front of Shahbagh Hotel on the main Avenue. The purpose of this building is not known.

Towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th came a period of revival, when under the patronage of the British, especially Lord Curzon, a new hybrid style developed, which sought to take inspiration from the old Muslim architecture but at the same time giving all the amenities of the new buildings. The first building in this style is the Northbrooke Hall, and then followed a series, like the Curzon Hall, Fazlul Huq Hall, Dacca Hall, Dacca Medical College, Salimullah Hall and others.

A new era of construction has dawned in Dacca after the establishment of Pakistan. So far the buildings erected are all of utilitarian type, and none of them shows the grandeur or magnificence which is a tribute to a monument. In all these buildings attempt is made to provide as much space as possible with minium expense. The use of re-inforced concrete has enabled the architects to plan for multi-storied buildings, and at least in two cases —the Institute of Arts building and the Public Library.

1. One example is the *Kauser House* of Mr. S. M. Taifoor in Siddiq Bazar Lane, Dacca.

(now handed over to the University of Dacca) this idea is stretched further in making the concrete pillars the main props of the entire superstructure. Again it is in this Library as well as in the East Pakistan Regional Laboratory building at Dhanmandi that a wind screen, consisting of circlets, has been provided to enhance the beauty. Another remarkable feature in the modern buildings is the tall vertical rests that cut the frontage and support insignificant eves over the windows or doors. Apart from these utilitarian buildings and private houses we have two mosques built in the Cantonment area—one follows the old Mughal style of domed structure and another is in the new style of a flat roof. The new mosque of *Al-Baitul Mukarram*, which is now under construction near Stadium, is well placed just facing Jinnah Avenue and further ahead Nawabpur Road. Its magnitude suggests that the mosque may prove to be a lasting glory to Pakistan.

1. *Armenian Church*

The Armenian Church is situated on Church Road in between Armanitola and Mitford Hospital. The early history of the Armenians has been given above (p. 43). Here an account of the Christmas celebration in the church is given, as witnessed by Lieutenant Colonel C. J. C. Davidson, in 1840. "I entered the Church through a verandah about fourteen feet wide. The floor of the interior of the building was divided into three parts ; one, enclosed by a railing, for the altar ; a central portion into which two folding doors opened : and another, railed off, which was exclusively occupied by the women and children, having a gallery over it. The altar stands in a semi-circle about four feet distant from the wall : it is made or appears to be made of wood and is raised to the height

of about ten feet by steps. These steps sustain twenty-four wax candles each three feet long, and also a number of small crosses of some gilt or shining metal. Although it was a bright sunshiny morning the candles were all burning.

"In front of the altar but a little to the left side stood the officiating priest, a man of about fifty years of age, wearing spectacles. A piece of his scalp was shaved in a circular form, to the diameter of two inches and a quarter precisely. His under-garment was richly ornamented with embroidered silver rosettes and had a rich border of similar work at the bottom. His outer vest was a *khin-khwab* (or golden tissue) cloak, having at the bottom of it a border four inches wide and massive quite stiff with embroidery. He stood at a small reading desk, close to the central part of the church, and before him was placed a large receptacle of holy water.

"The service which this priest read seemed to proceed with wonderful rapidity and during its progress he held in his left hand an instrument of thin silver or tin plate, having what appeared to me a picture in its centre, with diverging radii. This was occasionally elevated. While reading he was joined every now and then by four or five other persons, chiefly youths wearing long silk coats of a cinnamon colour with crimson silk ornaments on the shoulders, and having each a crimson cross down the centre of their backs. One of these occasionally repeated "Ameen, Ameen," in the same nasal tone which distinguished the reading and chanting. On each flank of the desk stood a boy who held a rod in his hand to the end of which was attached a lighted candle in a lantern : while no less than twelve wax candles were burning round the desk..........

"When the reading was finished the priest left the desk, walked towards the altar and placed upon it the

silver instruments before described : then descending the steps he brought back the book and placed it on a moveable stool covered with dark crimson cloth, along with another instrument, in front of the railing, which separated the altar part from the centre of the church. In a few minutes of the male part of the centre of the congregation...... ......advanced to the railing and kissed the silver cross on the book and like-wise the instrument. Little children were then brought or carried up ; and during this ceremony phials, common beer bottles, silver cups, etc., were handed to one of the assistants at the desk who filled them with the holy water and returned them to their owners.

"When the service was ended I left the church and found that the priest had entered the verandah through a side door and was occupied in reading a service from a book over several tomb-stones covered with the Armenian characters : and then I marked that a small hollow in the floor, less than the size of a tea saucer, at the head of each of the tomb-stone, was filled with wood ashes and cinders."[1]

2. *Ahsan Manzil*

The Ahsan Manzil is situated on the bank of the river Buriganga just near Wiseghat, and can be approached from Islampur Road. On this site formerly stood the French Factory. It was purchased in about 1838 by Khwaja Alimullah, great-grandfather of Nawab Salimullah (see above pp. 117-18). The palace was originally built in 1872 by Nawab Sir Abdul Ghani, who called it Ahsan Manzil after the name of his son, Nawab Sir Ahsanullah Bahadur. The present building is a reconstruction after the

1. *Bengal : Past and Present*, Vol. XLII, 1931, pp. 39—41.

great tornado of 1888. The models of the old and new Ahsan Manzil in silver filligree work, are now kept inside the palace.

It was at this very palace that Lord Curzon stayed as the guest of Nawab Sir Salimullah Bahadur and witnessed the rise of the new capital of Dacca after the first partition of Bengal. It was here that the important decisions regarding the future of the Muslims were taken after the annulment of the first partition, and in this very palace were born the ideas, which later on culminated in the foundation of All India Muslim League.

The most important building in the Ahsan Manzil is the grand palace. Occupying the centre of a large quadrangle, it stands on a high plinth, two storeys high with a crowning dome above, which is the highest point in the old city. The building has a broad front facing the river and commanding a view, grandiosque and picturesque. From the river side it stands out most prominently above the cluster of little houses around. From this side a wide flight of steps takes us direct to the second storey, and we are face to face with the grand triple-arched portals, prominently projected from the main wall and enlivened with fluted pilasters, cornice mouldings, crenellations and kiosks on the top. Similarly decorated projections mark the two ends on the east and west. Behind the central crenellations rises the dome supported on octagonal drum, and covering a square room below, which served as the visitor's sitting room. This is the central part, dividing the whole building into two symmetrical halves, —the eastern and the western. The eastern wing consists of a drawing room, a library and three guest rooms, while the western has a ball room and other residential rooms. All along the north and south sides run vaulted verandahs with an open terrace projected in the middle. The

central part of the back verandah is converted into a room containing steps leading down to the ground-floor, where similar arrangement of rooms is kept. Here we have the famous darbar hall on the western wing and the dining hall on the eastern. The terrace of the upper storey here gives place to a porch. In front of the porch extend lawns now lying vacant. On the river side an attempt was made to build a fountain.

On requesting the manager, Court of Wards, Nawab of Dacca estate, a visitor can see the collection of museum specimens, kept in the Ahsan Manzil. These specimens include paintings and photographs, arms and weapons, coats of mail complete from head to foot, dressing table in beautiful wood-work, Italian round table, models of Husaini Dalan and Ahsan Manzil in silver filligree work, beautiful ivory mat made in Sylhet, animal heads and skeletons.

The Ahsan Manzil has been closely connected with the rejuvination of the Muslims of this sub-continent in 20th century. It has served the cause of the Muslim Nation, and deserves to be protected as a National Monument. Today the building is in a very deplorable condition. The rooms have been partitioned by share-holders and let out to several persons who have spoiled the whole building.

3. *Victoria Park*

Victoria Park commemorates the name of the Empress Victoria. This park came into existence in the first half of the 19th century on the ruins of an old building, called Antaghar, which was a club house of the Armenians then living in large number in the neighbourhood. Later on, the English purchased the neighbouring house from the

Armenians, and the club also was appropriated by them. But soon the building fell and remained in ruinous condition. During the mutiny of 1857, the mutineers were hanged at this spot (See above pp. 114-15). This park was developed mainly due to the efforts of Nawab Sir Abdul Ghani, the ancestor of rhe present Nawab of Dacca. Inside the park can be seen an obelisk, on which is inscribed on one side :

"In token of sympathy with the Nawabs Abdul Ghunny and Ahsunullah this obelisk has been erected by their European friends in affectionate rememberance of Khajeh Hafiz Ullah. July 8th 1884." On the other side it is engraved : "To Khajeh Hafiz Ullah, son of Nawab Ahsunullah Khan Bahadur and grandson of Nawab Abdul Ghunny C. S. I.

Born 28th January, 1868. Died 8th July, 1884."

The park was oval in shape, and was enclosed within iron railing. Formerly four British cannons, embedded in earth marked the boundary of the former club house, but now these cannons have been taken out and kept inside the park. In Taylor's time the neighbourhood had a different appearance. He writes : "At the junction of these streets, there is a small open space, which is laid out in the form of a square, with a circular garden in its centre, and in the vicinity of this square, and along the bank of the river to the distance of half a mile, are situated the English Factory, St. Thomas' Church, the Government School, the Native Hospital, and most of the houses of the European residents."[1] Now this park is being changed into a *Shahid* memorial commemorating the martyrs of 1857 struggle for freedom.

1. Taylor's *Topography of Dacca*, p. 87.

On the river side there is another park, called Coronation Park, commemorating the coronation of Edward VII.

4. *Anglican Church*

It is situated on Johnson Road, to the north of Victoria Park. The building of this church was completed in 1819,[1] and it was consecrated on Sunday, the 10th July, 1824, by Bishop Heber,[2] when he visited Dacca. The other date,[3] 1872, given for its consecration is obviously wrong. This church is connected with the Church of England. The present person in charge is the Bishop, the Right Reverend J. S. Blair.

The building is typical of the church style found in Indo-Pak sub-continent. It consists of a rectangular hall, divided into a central nave and side aisles by two rows of brick pillars with the main service platform, on eastern side, slightly raised. Externally, two verandahs, with sloping roofs, have been added on the north and south, and a porch on the west. The steeple is square, carried up to two stages higher than the roof, each stage having window openings, the topmost having also a clock. The roof of the main hall is flat, resting on wooden girders. At the four corners can be seen smaller steeples. Above the cornice moulding the parapet is well marked by short pillars at intervals. The arches at the doorways and windows are Gothic, but those at the main tower are four-centred and pointed. The piers have rectangular panels worked in plaster.

5. *Baptist Mission in Dacca*

Reference has already been made (See above p. 115) to the

1. *Calcutta Diocesan Magazine*, September, 1952.
2. *Heber's Narrative*, Vol. I, p. 150.
3. *Calcutta Diocesan Magazine*. September, 1952.

early history of Baptist Mission in Dacca. The pioneer missionary, Leonard, and his successors had their head-quarters, for about sixty years, at Chota Katra. Subsequently a house, which still stands, though in ruins, on the river side, between the Wise house and former Telegraph office, was rented and used by the missionaries for several years; Mr. Bion lived in it after leaving the *Katra* house, which he seems to have relinquished to Mr. Robert Robinson. Yet again a house, since demolished, in Wiseghat Road was rented, and for a time in the eighties and nineties of the last century the now rather dilapidated building at the corner of Sadarghat Road, opposite Regent's Park Hall, served as the Mission residence. Mr. T. H. Barnett superintended the erection of the present building in Bangla Bazar. The foundation stone was laid on 29th September, 1884, and the house was completed in January 1887. About 1890 Mr. Wright Hay obtained money from friends at home and erected a Gospel Hall with mud floor and mat walls and thatched roof facing the cross roads on the west side of the compound. Mr. William Carey, in 1903, tapped the generosity of the members of Regent's Park Chapel, London, for the cost of a new and more commodious building. With these gifts Mr. Sutton Page was able to erect the present Regent's Park Hall. It was opened in 1905, and has been in constant use ever since for students, evangelistic and Sunday school works. The imposing pile of the buildings, which now fill the eastern side of the Mission compound—the students' hostel and warden's house—were erected in 1912.

Baptist Missionaries were the pioneers of English education in Dacca. As early as 1817 five schools were opened for the instruction of the children, and one more specially meant for the Persian language. By 1824 the number of schools was raised to fifteen with thirteen hundred pupils.

This educational work was carried on till the establishment of Government School and College.[1]

6. *Northbrooke Hall*

Northbrooke Hall is situated on the bank of the river Buriganga in Bangla Bazar, and can be approached from Northbrooke Hall Road, which is on the old road leading from Dacca to Narayanganj.

The Hall is named after Lord Northbrooke, Governor-General of India between 1872-1876, who visited Dacca in 1874. It was originally meant for a town-hall, but later converted into a public library. Still later a club-house was added to its south east, and called Johnson Hall. In the early fifties the building was used as a telegraph office. Today Central Womens' College is held there.

Northbrooke Hall building is a unique attempt on the part of the local masons to revive the old Mughal style of architecture, but the result has been totally different. At best it is an edifice of European taste, incorporating a few architectural elements that are peculiarly Muslim. The semi-circular horse-shoe arches, the projected bay containing the entrance on the north, the four octagonal minars at the northern salients, the ornamented parapet and the towering pinnacles above, distinguish the Muslim features. The entrance bay has trefoil arch at the outer face with floral patterns at the spandrels, and spirally fluted pilaster supports below, that are rather ornamental. It leads into an almost rectangular hall, which has its northern corners cut off to shorten the northern side, in which place we find four salients, each containing a *minar*. To this hall are attached

1. Harold Bridges : *Baptist Missionary in Dacca*, Ms.—kindly lent to me for consultation by Dr. Davis of the Mission.

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smaller rooms on the south, which open out into a vaulted verandah, fronted by an entrance porch. The roof of these subsidiary rooms is lower than that of the main hall. From the river side we get a fine view of the graded roofs with pinnacles and ornamented parapets. From the city side the building appears grandiosque and magnificent. The brick-red colour of the walls stands out most prominently in the surrounding.

7. *Baldha Museum & Garden*

Baldha Museum is situated in Wari opposite the Christian Cemetery, about a mile from the Dacca Railway Station. It was started in the year 1925, as a "Home Museum" by Narendra Narayan Roy, zamindar of Baldha, an estate in Dacca district. Now it is popularly known as Baldha Museum after the name of the estate.

The collection was made by the personal efforts of the zamindar, and he spent the whole income of the estate for the development of the Museum. At the time of his death in 1944 he executed a will that the whole of the expenditure of the Museum and the garden should be met from the estate. The present Superintendent is Mr. Hannan.

The Museum remains open betwen 8 A. M. and 1 P. M. on all days except Sundays and gazetted holidays.

No separate building was erected for the purpose of the Museum. The ground-floor rooms in the private residence of the zamindar have been utilised to display the antiquities. They are four in number. In the porch are placed two cauldrums. One long rectangular hall contains a mixed collection of coins, textiles, metal images, household objects, beads and books on art. The second room shows models

of village and town life, and ivory and silver-filligree works. In the third room is the richest collection of arms and weapons. In the fourth room are found the coral and other treasures from the sea.[1] This museum collection will soon be transferred to the Dacca Museum.

The garden is a unique collection of botanical plants. It is better to call it a museum of rare plants than a garden. It is housed in two large enclosures, to which very significant names have been given—One is called "Culture", and the other "Cybele", The arrangement in the garden lacks in garden planning. One feels as if one is passing through a trimmed forest of Bengal. The "Culture" enclosure has two divisions. The smaller one is called "Psyche". On its one side we have rows of small pools containing water-lilies. In the centre is the grassy rectangle surrounded on three other sides with flowery plants. From this place we pass on to the bigger enclosure, the central point of which is occupied by a circular pyramid, each step of which contains cactus plants. Over the head was formerly to be seen powerful light, which needs restoration. To the north and south of this central point are green-houses, and on the east and west are other plants. The Victoria-regia was to be seen on the west. A circular green-house for cactus is very beautifully arranged, where the plants lie in each other's embrace and whisper the perfect repose that they have found here. Further ahead is the rectangular green-house, where plants have been arranged in two oval forms in the centre, and on the extreme ends are to be seen the hilly path going up and down. At many other places in the garden an attempt has been made to copy the hilly path-ways, which go in a winding fashion.

1. For detailed description see *Journal of the Museums' Association of Pakistan*, Vol. IV, No. 1, April, 1952, pp. 50—62.

The "Cybele" enclosure was built in the year 1936. From its gateway we pass through an avenue of magnolia. On our right is the grassy rectangle, where at one spot the dead body of the zamindar was cremated. On our left we have groves of trees. In the centre is the swimming pool, to which go down steps from either side. On its opposite bank stands a two-storeyed building, named "Joy" by the founder. Just near this building we have the bigger variety of mimosa, and little further off the century plants, which in Bengal give flowers after sixteen years. After passing this tank, we arrive at the last rectangle where a memorial to the murdered son of the zamindar stands.

8, *Dacca Museum and Nimtali Gate*

Dacca Museum is situated on the northern side of the Secretariat Road, roughly equidistant from Gulistan and Dacca Medical College. It occupies the site of the former Nimtali Kothi, the description of which has been given earlier in the words of Bishop Heber.[1] The museum proper is housed in the easternmost building, which was originally a *baradari*. In 1961 two wings were added to the original building. The central building, enclosed within a compound wall, is the quarter of the curator of the museum. The western, double-storeyed building (Nimtali Gate), accommodates the Office of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan.

The Museum remains open on all days, except Friday and gazetted holidays, between 10 A. M. and 4 P. M. Special arrangement is made for show and lectures to a group of students on previous intimation to the curator. Entrance is free.

1. See above pp. 107-8.

The proposal to start a Museum at Dacca was first mooted in the autumn of 1909, when preliminary discussions took place. It was formally inaugurated on 7th August, 1913, by His Excellency Lord Carmichael, the then Governor of Bengal. Originally a room in the Secretariat, present Dacca Medical College, was allotted for the display of museum collections. The present buildings were made available in 1920. The first curator was Dr. N. K Bhattasali, who served, and built up the Museum for thirty-one years till his death in February, 1946. The present honorary curator is Dr. Ahmad Hasan Dani.

The Museum mainly displays specimens of handicrafts, textiles, calligraphy, paintings, art and archaeology, representing various cultures of East Pakistan. The first hall is a Buddhist gallery where Buddhist materials in stone, bronze, wood and terracotta are displayed, The next is a Hindu gallery where specimens of Vishnu, Siva and Sungod are kept. In the showcases here can also be seen bronze, silver and other metal objects. The third hall is the Muslim gallery showing textile fabrics, illuminated manuscripts, coins and china-ware. The fourth will have arms and armoury from the Baldha Museum. The fifth is a painting gallery. The remaining sculptures are shown in the verandah. The museum also has a good library.

9. *Curzon Hall (pl. XXIII)*

Curzon Hall is one of a group of buildings that came into existence as a result of the first partition of Bengal in 1905. All of them have a family likeness and aspire to translate in brick and plaster the ideal of grandeur. These were built at the dictation of the British Government and hence the predominating influence is that of Anglo-Indian taste, which is, of course, saturated with those elements of

Muslim architecture that were made popular by the Great Mughals. But none of their elegance and lightness of structure is seen in them. These monuments are purely massive in character, to which symmetry of parts and variety in forms have given an added attraction and appeal.

Curzon Hall is the earliest of these buildings. Its foundation was laid on 19th February, 1904, by Lord Curzon himself, when he visited Dacca on his political mission.

> "Where once the owl did hoot
> The jackal yell,
> In thickets dwarf and tall,
> There stands today, in state
> A sentinel—
> The splendid Curzon Hall"[1]

It is situated inside a compound, very near Dacca High Court on Government House Road. In the same compound now stand other buildings appertaining to Science section of the University of Dacca. Curzon Hall is a double-storeyed structure of brick-red colour consisting of a central hall with wings on the east and west. A continuous verandah runs on all its sides. The building faces north and presents a grand frontage with the central part prominently projecting in a semi-octagonal shape and the elevation relieved with wide arched portals of horse-shoe shape below and windows above. The crowning element is an attractive mass of brickwork, decorated with a row of panels, eves on bracket, and kiosks on the top. The corners are provided with *minars*, topped with *chhatris*, and the verandahs are screened by a row of arched openings, the arches being horse-shoe in the lower storey and cusped in the second. The wings are varied at the ends, each end having made to contain two

1. *Dacca Review*, August 1911, p. 174 Vol. I, No. 5.

sets of rooms, placed north and south, and further having *minars* at the corners. The interior of the Curzon Hall is a spacious rectangular hall with galleries on sides in three storeys. These galleries, which are supported on huge piers, have beautiful screens. The building is perfectly symmetrical.

Originally, Curzon Hall was meant to be a town hall, but since the annulment of the first partition of Bengal, Dacca College was housed in its rooms. After the establishment of Dacca University in 1921, it has been used as part of the Science Section, and the main hall as the examination hall as well as convocation hall.

10. *Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall*

It is situated on College Road close to Curzon Hall, and was built during the first partition of Bengal. Originally it was Engineering hostel, when the Ahsanullah Engineering School was located within the compound of Curzon Hall. In 1921, it was given over to Dacca Intermediate College. Since July 1942 it has been named Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall. It forms one of the Halls of the Dacca University. The Hall is managed by a provost, and number of tutors. The present provost is Mr. M. Safiullah.

The Hall was originally a double-storeyed building. It consists of four rows of residential rooms enclosing a quadrangular courtyard laid with garden. A third storey of rooms has been recently built. Formerly there were 150 rooms, but now 75 more have been added. The main arch-way opens between rounded corners in the south. The entrance is quite simple, but the flanking rooms meant for the office and house tutors have on the top a prominent dome. There are six more such domes at the corners, two each at the southern corners and one at the northern ones.

The arches are horse-shoe in the southern domes, but the interior row of arches that screen off the verandahs from the courtyard, are of four-centred pointed type. The building is poor in architectural details, and appears unsophisticated.

11. *Dacca Hall*

A tank separates it from the Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall. Dacca Hall is another building of this period. Originally, it was a hostel of Dacca College students, but since the establishment of the University, it has been appropriated by it for the students. After the partition of 1947 a portion of it was given over to the students of Fazlul Huq Hall owing to the lack of Hindu students. Now the whole thing is under Dacca Hall. Its architecture is exactly the same as Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall. Dr. M. Rahman is the present provost of the Hall.

12. *Jagannath Hall*

This Hall wass started in 1921 at the very beginning of the University of Dacca for the Hindu students. In 1943 all the buildings of the Hall were occupied by the military, and the students were shifted to one wing of Dacca Hall. After the Independence the office of the Registrar, University of Dacca, has been located in the south house of the Hall, and the Assembly Hall was appropriated for the Provincial Legislative Assembly. In 1957 the Hindu students shifted from Dacca Hall and lodged in the north house of the Hall. In August 1961 the Assembly hall was also released. Today the south house has been opened again in sheds. It is hoped that in two to three years' time Registrar's office will be shifted to a new building and the Hall will have all its old places. Today nearly 250 students live in the north and

south houses of the Hall, which lie on either side of a tank. The north house has now a third storey. Dr. Govind Chandra Dev is the present provost of the Hall.

13. *Salimullah Muslim Hall (pl. XXIV)*

Salimullah Muslim Hall is a building of a much later date. Its foundation was laid on 22nd August, 1929, by the then Governor of Bengal. But really the Muslim Hall came into existence[1] from the day the University was established. It was first housed in the western portion of the University building (present Dacca Medical Hospital), and after the construction of the present building, the Hall was shifted there. During the war the entire building was appropriated by the Government for the sick and wounded. The students were shifted to one wing of Fazlul Huq Hall. In 1946 the Hall was released. The present provost of the Hall is Dr. Mazharul Huq.

The style of its architecture is different from that of the buildings described earlier. In general plan it follows the system of other Halls—a quadrangular courtyard, beautifully laid with a garden, is enclosed by four rows of residential rooms in two storeys. The rooms have continuous verandahs towards the courtyard, through the centre of which a covered passage runs joining southern and northern wings. The main entrance is in the middle of the southern side, and opens between two square towers, topped with yellow dome. These open into a verandah behind which is the Assembly Hall. In order to match with this southern arrangement, the northern side provides for a common room and a dining hall in the ground floor and prayer hall in the second storey. The frontage in the south has

1. For the earlier proposal see above p. 133.

a continuous verandah, and is also provided with subsidiary porches. The four corners are prominently marked by square projections with triple domes as crowning element. The arches are all pointed but the windows have flat lintels. The arrangement is, no doubt, more systematic than in other Halls, and there is perfect unity in the different parts of the building. The frontage in the south is quite arresting. There is no poverty of architectural elements though the older elements have mostly vanished.

14. *Iqbal Hall and Womens' Hall*

Iqbal Hall is situated to the west of Salimullah Muslim Hall and Womens' Hall lies on Nilkhet Road just close to the Vice-Chancellor's residence. Both of them were originally hostels. In 1956 they were raised to the status of a Hall. Originally the place, where now Iqbal Hall stands, had hutments for the soldiers during the War. These huts lay vacant until they were occupied by the students coming from Calcutta and other places after the Independence. Later Government recognised it as a hostel and appointed a superintendent. Still later the University of Dacca took it over and appointed Dr. Mafizuddin Ahmed as warden. The name Iqbal hostel, and later Hall, was given by the students themselves. Now the huts have been removed and a two-storeyed building stands on this spot. The present provost is Dr. Syed Sajjad Husain.

The Womens' Hall had also a small building. Now a new double-storeyed building has come up with a new house of the provost in its compound. The present provost is Mrs. A. Imam.

15. *Dacca Medical College*

It was originally meant for the Secretariat of the

Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, but after the annulment of the first partition of Bengal it was allotted to the University of Dacca. The western portion of this building accommodated the students, first of Salimullah Muslim Hall and Jagannath Hall and later of Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall. In 1942 the western portion was occupied by the military for the wounded soldiers. After the partition of 1947 that portion has been permanently occupied by Medical College and Hospital, while the University has only eastern wing under its control. Very soon the Arts classes of the University will be shifted to a new building in Nilkhet area.

The building is situated on the Secretariat Road,—name originated from the fact of the Old Secretariat finding its lodgement here. Two monumental gateways lead into the compound—the eastern gate into the University and the western one into the Medical College. The main building, which is double-storeyed, is longitudinal, running east and west, to which extra wings have been attached at the two ends. A third block is added on the southern side behind the main central hall, through which access is provided from the projecting porch in front. On either side of this hall runs a corridor in between a row of rooms which have also outer verandahs running continuously. The two wings on eastern and western ends have similar corridor between a row of rooms and also extra porch at the sides. The central hall is marked by a crowning dome above a circular drum, pierced with windows, while the front of the hall is flanked by square towers having flat roof. Such domes can also be seen in the eastern and western blocks. Arrangement has been made to let more light into the corridor through an extra well-ventilated square tower kept at a distance from the central hall on either side. The exterior has an effective appearance with its tall flat-arched openings that screen off the verandah and a continuous

projected eve supported on brackets that distinguish the cornice. The dome is almost flat with external addition of brackets added to its drum. No attempt has been made to give height to the building. All along flatness and horizontality strike the eye. There is an effort to revive the old elements of local architecture, but these serve at best the ideal of symmetry and proportion. To this original building now several new additions have been made for outdoor patients, nurses' home, College building and others.

16. *High Court Building*

This building was constructed after the Curzon Hall. It is situated on the south-eastern side of Ramna Race Course, and lies in the middle of a spacious compound, to which a monumental arched gateway gives an access. Originally, it was meant to be a Government House, and hence the road, going in its front, came to be known as Government House Road, but after its completion, the then consulting architect of Government of India did not consider it worth the residence of the Governor. For long it was used as an office, and later Dacca Intermediate College was housed in it. The High court will now have a new building in front of the Secretariat and this area has been earmarked for a museum and public library.

In style it is a Renaissance building, rather lacking in breadth. However, the frontage is remarkably appealing with its prominent porch below a triangular pediment over Corinthian columns above, and on the top a crowning dome resting on columns and piers in a circle,—all the three ranging in three stages while the perfect symmetry and proportion of the sides, together with richness in detail, clearly provide a contrast and variety in froms. There is no dearth of architetural elements, which have all been

selected from the Classical Buildings as are generally to be found in Renaissance period, and these have been well set, but the interior lacks in breadth. The building is completely European in taste and spirit.

17. *Greek Memorial*

The memorial stands on the main Shahbagh Avenue and faces Ramna Race Course. It occupies the site where originally a Greek cemetery was situated. The monument stands alone and at once attracts the eye. To its southern side is now being built Atomic Research Centre and to its northern a Students' Centre. The main building is square, which, with its projecting bay, one on each of the four sides, makes a cross plan. The bay is formed by two fluted pillars of Doric order, on which rests the entablature and a triangular pediment. Over the top on the eastern face we get the following inscription MAKARIOI OYS EPHELEPHOY KAI PROSELABOY. One entrance from the east leads into the Memorial. On the walls within are fixed nine inscriptions carved on black stone, of which five are in Greek and the remaining in English. The oldest inscription is dated 1800 and the latest 1843. The persons buried were businessmen in Narayanganj.

18. *Government Institute of Arts and the Library Building*

Following the same Shahbagh Avenue we come to Ayub Avenue after crossing a big traffic circle. Just close to this place stands the Library building. Beyond it lies an open space now occupied by green shrubs. It was at this spot that the first session of the All India Muslim League was held (see above p. 97 and p. 130), and for this reason this spot has been earmarked for a National

Monument. Next to this place stands the Government Institute of Arts. Both these buildings were erected in 1953-54, and were planned by Mr. Mazharul Islam, the first architect from East Pakistan. The buildings are completely alien in taste and show the adoption of a utilitarian type of American architecture to a stormy and windy climate of East Pakistan. The provision of large windows, fitted with glass planes, no doubt provides sufficient light in the halls, but it invites glare in our sunny country and consequently is a source of trouble to the readers and workers inside. Such defects in plan are quite natural when foreign types are sought to serve local needs. It is hoped that in due course out of these new ideas suitable architectural types will grow. In the Library building the wall surfaces are relieved in two places with mural scenes from the life of East Pakistani people but done in European style of triangulation—a style which conveys very little to the local people. This work was done by two East Pakistani artists, Miss Novera Ahmed and Mr Hamoodur Rahman who received their training in Europe. In 1961 the Public Library was handed over to Dacca University, and here the additions are being made to accommodate the University Library, of which Mr. M. Siddiq Khan is the Librarian. The Government Institute of Arts will soon be developed into a College. The present principal is Mr. Zainul Abedin, the famous painter of East Pakistan.

19. *Shahbagh Hotel (pl. XXII)*

Following the same Ayub Avenue we arrive at Shahbagh[1] Hotel which is so far the only first class hotel in Dacca. It was built in 1953-54 by the Government but the hotel is run on private management. It has air-conditioned dining

1. For the origin of the name see p. 7, p. 35 and p. 76 above.

halls and open terraces, and with its four-storeyed structure it commands a wide view. The visitors can have a glance of the verdant green of East Pakistan from their rooms. In front of the hotel is now built a round fountain over the traffic circle. The fountain is completely alien in taste and has an umbrella cap on the top supported on eight scissor-like bifurcated round pillars.

20. *Motijheel Buildings*

The name Motijheel (*Jheel* meaning lake) takes its origin from the serpentine rivulet which flows on one side of this area (see above p. 5). It was later applied to a small pond within the Dilkusha palace of Dacca Nawab family, now only a single red double-storeyed building and a mosque with a few graves are left behind. The whole area has been cleaned and well laid with roads and joined by D. I. T. Avenue with Jinnah Avenue, the fashionable shopping centre of Dacca. This Jinnah Avenue leads, on the southern side, to Nawabpur Road and, on the northern, gives a magnificent view of the new mosque of *Al-Baitul Mukarram* now under construction. At its southern extreme stands the Government House, where the old wooden structure has been pulled down and a new residence for the Governor is being built. At the northern end stands the circular stadium. In between the stadium and the Government House lies the *Purana Paltan Maidan* of old, where momentous meetings of political nature were held in the past. This *Maidan* is now divided into two parts by the D. I. T. Avenue and used for sports. Opposite the *Maidan*, on another side of the Jinnah Avenue, are aligned shops, the main attraction being the Gulistan building, which accommodated, besides shops, two air-conditioned cinema houses and Chou Chin Chow restaurant, the famous haunt of the gay youths.

At the head of the D. I. T. Avenue stands an old Mughal cannon. Its name is given as 'Bibi Marium'. Mr. S. M. Taifoor conjectures that it is one of the guns captured by Mir Jumla from Assam during his expedition (1661-62). Originally this gun was placed in front of *Bara Katra* in the place now called Sawari Ghat. In 1832 Mr. Walters, the Collector of Dacca, removed this gun to *Chouk* where it was placed on a platform, still standing a little way north of the *Chouk Mosque*. This was again removed to Sadarghat in 1907 by the Archaeological Department. At that place the Hindu women held it in high veneration and annointed the breech of the gun with vermillion and greese. In 1957 Dacca Improvement Trust brought the cannon to the present site.

Passing beyond the cannon we arrive at the Dacca Improvement Trust building, which rises up in four tiers, each succeeding tier being reduced in length till we come to the topmost tier which consists of a tall square clock tower. The tower rests on a stumpy shoulder and raises its head aloft, like a crane, to give a wide view from afar. The entrance variation and the tall pillars over the balcony in the second stage do not improve the plan which is defective in its very inception. The building does speak of the grandeur which was visualised by the then chairman of the Trust, Mr. G. A. Madani, but his vision could not be properly translated in architecture.

Next to D. I. T. building the most important structure, that attracts our eye, is Adamjee Court which is primarily meant for business deal. But its facade, with its semi-circular bend and tall height broken by high inclines meant for supporting the eves over the windows, has a touch of magnificence, and when this vision is combined with the side wings of similar height, the idea of grandeur

at once strikes our imagination and leads us to believe that the Court is really a huge construction.

Next to this building we come to the office of Pakistan International Airways Corporation, which has a pleasing grace in its plain facade. Moving onward we come to the huge structure of Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation—a building which tries to improve upon Adamjee Court by providing an extra porch in front, while its other features are an adoption from the earlier building.

This winding D. I. T. Avenue joins the main road which comes from Ramkrishna Mission Road and goes straight to Purana Paltan. On this main road, with their backs to the Motijheel stream, are now being built large number of commercial shops, which in course of time would develop into a great commercial centre.

21. *New Market*

New Market was built in 1952-54 to cater for the needs of the new population that had grown in Azimpura Estate and Dhanmandi residential area. On one side it faces Mirpur road and on the other Pilkhana road. It consists of two separate parts—one is a market for fish, meat and vegetables, and the other is a centre of retail shops for cloth, books, medicine, toilet materials and various other sundries needed for the household purposes. There are three main high arched gates leading into the shopping centre, one on Mirpur road, second on Pilkhana road and third facing west, at present an open space, and hence least used. This market is built in an oval fashion with a central park as the main focus, round which goes an Inner Circle with shops on the inner side as well as outer side.

A pedestrian pathway separates the Inner Circle from the Outer Circle, which has shops only on the inner side. There is a running covered verandah in front of the shops. From the outside the blank walls with their ventilation present a dismal feature, which is hardly relieved by the disproportionate gates. The shopping centre is a great help to the visitors who find here most of their requirements. It is closed on Thursday and the forenoon of Friday, but remains open on Saturday and Sunday, when the rush of people is great as the city shops are closed on these two last days.

CHAPTER X

DACCA NEIGHBOURHOOD

Introduction : There are quite a good number of interesting as well as historical places in the neighbourhood of Dacca, some of which lie on the roads approachable by motor while others can be visited by enthusiasts by boat during the rains and winter. A trip outside Dacca is always enjoyable. The greenery of the countryside, the simplicity of the life of the villagers and monuments in their romantic ruins provide the needed diversion from the busy life of the city. The most interesting remains lie on the Dacca-Narayanganj road which follows the Buriganga river for quite a long distance. Narayanganj can also be approached by Demra road which passes through Bawani Jute Mill, Adamjeenagar, Dhakeswari Cotton Mill, Chittaranjan Cotton Mill and other industrial concerns, all of which are situated along the Lakhya river. One can as well take a boat from Sadarghat and go direct to Narayanganj, or go by car to Demra and take a boat there and go down the current of the Lakhya. At Narayanganj one can cross over the river Lakhya and go to the rural market centre at Nabiganj and see the venerated *Qadam Rasul* building, or go to Bandar and see the *fort of Sonakanda* and the *tomb of Haji Baba Saleh*, or by launch go over to Munshiganj—the famous place of fragrant bananas of East Pakistan—and see *Idrakpur fort*, or go to Mir Qadim and walk to the ruined cities of old Rampal and Vikrampur. From Nabiganj a footpath leads to Sonargaon. In between Adamjeenagar and Demra a new road to Chittagong is under construction. This road after crossing the river Lakhya passes through Sonargaon. At Demra there is a ferry to

take the car over to the other side and one can follow the newly built road upto the business centre of Narsingdi. In the vicinity of this new road one can also see some old historical places. Another important direction, where one can go by car, is along the Mymensingh road, which passes Tongi, an old market place, Mannonagar, a new industrial town with a newly-built fine mosque, Jaydevpur, (which is actually three miles away from the main road but has an old palace and fine picnic spots), and finally to Mirzapur, about 60 miles distance, which has a famous hospital and other charitable institutions founded by the great philanthropist R. P. Shah. Still another route is the Mirpur road which leads to the medieval *Dargah of Hazrat Shah Ali Baghdadi*, then goes along the Sabhar dairy farm, leaves behind on the left and right some historical places of old like Sabhar and Rajasan, and after crossing the Banshi river by ferry we reach Dhamrai, a peculiar relic of old, which was once a famous centre of muslin industry and even now well-known for its bronze ware. The town is a peculiar amalgam of Hindu Banias and Pathan peasants. This road leads right upto Aricha, this side of the great meeting place of the Padma and Jamuna, the other side being Goalando ghat.

Dacca-Narayanganj Road

The first monument on this road is a five-domed mosque of recent date but it is built in the old style. At the fifth mile comes the most important ruins of old—the *Pagla-Pul* (*pl XVI*). In 1666 the French traveller, Tavernier, came here and wrote, "Half a league lower, appears another river called Pagalu, upon which there is a fair bridge of brick, which Mirza-Mola (Mir Jumla) caused to be built. This river comes from the north-east ; and half league upward appears another river called Cadamtali, that runs from the north,

over which there is another bridge of brick. On both sides of the river are several towers, as it were inchased with several heads of men, executed for robbing upon the highway."[1] In 1824, Bishop Heber wrote, "Another evening I went in a beautiful boat of Mr. Mitford's to the "Pagla Pul", or Mad Bridge, a ruin four miles from Dacca. It is a very beautiful specimen of the richest Tudor Gothic, but I know not whether it is strictly to be called an Asiatic building, for the boatmen said the tradition is that it was built by a Frenchman "[2] The builder's name has already been given by Tavernier, and the tradition recorded by Heber has no foundation. The Tudor Gothic, referred to by Heber, is the shape of the arch, i. e. pointed four-centred arch. By the time charles D'Oyly made his drawings, the bridge was already in ruins.[3]

Originally, the bridge had three open arches, flanked at each end by a smaller closed arch, above which the road climbed in a steep camber. On the spandrels are prominent rosettes boldly projecting from the surface. At the four corners of the bridge stood originally octagonal hollow towers with arched openings below chhajjas, above which could be seen ribbed domes on cylindrical drums. The building is now encumbered with modern structures, but even in its ruins it retains many of its original features.

Next we come to a place called Fatulla (correctly Fatehullah) who was a Mughal officer. He built a mosque here during his life time. There was also a fort at this place (see above p. 25). After passing about a mile or so, we see on our left large number of tall spired monuments. These are death memorials of the Jaina merchants

1. Tavernier's *Travels*. p. 102.
2. Heber's *Narrative*, Vol. I, p. 153.
3. D'Oyly, *Antiquities of Dacca*, plates between pages 6 and 7.

who have been trading in Narayanganj. Finally we come to Narayanganj (see above pp. 110-11).

The name Narayanganj is derived from the image of Narayan (i. e. Vishnu) installed here by Bhikhan Lal Pande, who served the English loyally during the Plassey War and got this land as Lakhraj from the East India Company "for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the Thakoor (i. e. the god), for feeding the poor and for my support." The older name of its eastern locality, was Khizirpur, which even today is called Hajiganj. In that locality, behind the Fire Brigade, can be seen the remains of an old Mughal fort, which is wrongly attributed to Mir Jumla. It was a river fort guarding the passage into the Buriganga, which then joined the Lakhya at this spot (see above pp. 32-33) A little to the south-west of the fort is another group of Mughal monuments standing within an enclosed quadrangle. One of them is a three-domed (pl XVII) mosque showing Shaistakhani style of architcture, and the other is a tomb elaboratehy built with a square room in the centre and covered verandahs (now fallen) on all the other sides. This is the tomb of Bibi Biban, the daughter of Shaista Khan (see above p. 71).

Since the last quarter of the 18th century the importance of Narayanganj has been growing. Today, it is really a commercial and industrial suburb of Dacca, where we have the cotton and jute mills, and other industrial concerns. It stands at the head of the river Lakhya, where also meet Dhaleswari, Brahmaputra, Meghna and Buriganga.

Qadam Rasul at Nabiganj

Nabiganj is a small marketting town on the eastern bank of the river Lakhya, opposite Narayanganj. The name

Nabiganj is of recent time. Its older name, as given by Mirza Nathan,[1] was Rasulpur, and also Qadam Rasul. Mirza Nathan also points out that this name originated from the fact of the Qadam Rasul, i. e. foot-print of the Prophet, being deposited here. He informs that this foot-print "was obtained by Masum Khan Kabuli from the merchants who brought it from Arabia on payment of a large sum of money". The storey[2] given by Sayid Aulad Hasan regarding the discovery of the foot-print by Dewan Munawwar Khan and ultimately the erection of the building here by him, is not corroborated in historical account.

The shrine is enclosed within a compound wall, to which a double storeyed gateway provides an entrance. The gateway, which was built by Ghulam Muhammad, son of Ghulam Nabi, in A. D. 1814, gives a picturesque appearance from the river side. The shrine itself was built by Ghulam Nabi in 1758. The inscriptions recording the erection of these buildings are now preserved in the Dacca Museum. Besides the main shrine, there are ruins of a *langar-khana* (alms house) to its south ; to the north are the ruins of houses built by the Nawabs Nasrat Jang and Ghaziuddin Haidar ; and to the east are the ruins of a *hujra*, where pious people spend their time in prayer and religious meditation.

Sonakanda Fort at Bandar

Sonakanda fort is another old river defensive fortification, on the eastern bank of the river Lakhya, at Bandar opposite Narayanganj. The history of this fort has been given on pp. 110-11. Today, the river has slightly shifted

1. *Baharistan*-i-*Ghaibi*, Vol. II, p. 710.
2. Aulad Hasan, *Notes*, pp. 59—61.

westward, and the fort is hidden behind the industrial buildings of the present time. The defensive walls and the big drum are still in existence. According to tradition, the name Sonakanda is derived from Sona, the widowed daughter of the Barabhuinya chief Kedar Rai who cried (*kanda*) at this spot, while being carried away by Isa Khan.

Tomb & Mosque of Haji Baba Saleh

In the same town Bandar stands a stone grave belonging to Haji Baba Saleh, a pious Muslim, of the time of Alauddin Husain Shah (A. D. 1493—1519). The building which originally covered this grave has long been destroyed. Now a new enclosure wall has been erected. This Haji also built the mosque, standing close-by now completely renovated. Another mosque, constructed by him in A. D. 1482, stands to the east of the town of Bandar, in the locality called Khondkartola, but it has also been remodelled now.

Sonargaon

Sonargaon lies about three miles west of Narayanganj and can be approached by a causeway on foot, or in the rainy season one can go by boat down the river Lakhya, Meghna, and up the small rivulet Brahmaputra and a *khal* right upto the foot of the village.

Sonargaon, or more correcty Suvarnagrama, which literally means "Gold Town", is obviously of Hindu origin, but its ancient history is not yet definitely known. Its position on the bank of the Meghna gave it the first importance as an inland port town in the medieval history of Bengal, and during this very period it used to be the political capital of East Bengal. The first definite reference to this town is found in the *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* of

Zia ud-Din Barani, who speaks of the friendly relation of Rai Danuj of Sonargaon with Ghiyasuddin Balban, the Delhi emperor, at the time of the latter's visit to East Bengal in A. D. 1281. Ibn Battutah came to Sonargaon in about 1345, and here he embarked on a vessel that took him direct to Java. The Chinese ambassadors came to this place in early fifteenth century A. D. They record that Sonargaon was "a walled place with tanks, streets, bazars and which carries on a business in all kinds of goods," and add that "all goods are collected here and distributed." In about 1586 Ralph Fitch came to Sonargaon. He writes, "Sonargaon is a town six leagues from Sripur, where there is the best and finest cloth made of cotton that is in all India. The chief king of all those countries is called Isa Khan." After the establishment of the Mughal capital at Jahangirnagar (Dacca) the political importance of Sonargaon was finished, but as a producer of cotton fabrics it held the field till the foreign competition ruined its business, and reduced the whole town into an unrecognisable village.

There are innumerable ruins of old in the neighbourhood of the village, now called Mograpara. About half a mile to the north of the main causeway leading from Narayanganj to Mograpara, stands *Panch Pir Dargah*—a collection of five small brick tombs in one line on a platform about four feet high. Nothing definite is known about the persons buried here. They are generally attributed to *Panch Pir*, the most famous of them being Boro, i. e., Badr Alam.

About 1000 feet to the east of *Panch Pir* there is a fine massive stone sarcophagus (pl. XVIII) which the people ascribe to *Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah*, son of Sikandar Shah of Bengal. The king died in A. D. 1410. The tomb

stands on the edge of a dried up tank. It is a table tomb with a solid keeled top stone, originally surrounded by a pillared enclosure. The east side still retains three carved panels, each panel having a niche, from the apex of which hangs down a floreate lamp. The cornice is decorated with a line of billets over a beaded ornament.

About half a mile south-east from this place in the outskirts of the village of Mograpara, one spot is pointed out as *Damdama*, probably a part of the original fortification of the town. In the centre of the village can be seen an open grave of *Manna Shah Darvesh*. At a short distance, on the north, are the remains of *The Khanqah of Shaikh Muhammad Yusuf*, and the *Tombs of Hazrat Yusuf* himself and his son *Shaikh Mahmud*. The tombs are rectangular in plan with plastered walls, and the roofs having pyramidal Bengali dome. These are purely of the local variety.

Nearby stands a single-domed square *Mosque*, which was originally built by Jalal ud-Din Fateh Shah in A. D. 1484. But the present building is a reconstruction of early 19th century. The original stone pillars and mihrab stone can be seen inside the mosque. The inscription tablet, belonging to this mosque, is now fixed to a compound wall in front of the mosque. That stone is now besmeared with *chunam* (lime), in the hope of getting one's desire fulfilled. The compound, just referred to, encloses a few graves, which are attributed by the local people to the independent Sultans of Bengal, but such attribution has no historical basis. To the north of this mosque is an open ground, which is pointed out to be *Khazanchi Khana* (i. e. the treasury). To its west are the remains of residential buildings of the late Mughal period.

At a short distance from the *dargah* is a loose slab bearing a record of the time of *Nusrat Shah*, dated A. D. 1520. There are many other graves in the neighbourhood, like those of Ponkai Diwana, Pagla Sahib, of whom nothing historical is known. However, one notable monument is the Painam Bridge, which lies further away from the town on way to *Company ki Kothi*. Two mosques—one of Husain Shah, dated A. D. 1519 and the other of the time of Aurangzeb, dated 1704, formerly standing at Gowaldih, have now been turned into a heap of mound. The ornamental pillars and the mihrabs are buried within.

Idrakpur Fort at Munshiganj (pl. XX)

In the town of Munshiganj, approachable by steamer and launches from Narayanganj, exists a Mughal fort, known as Idrakpur Fort, possibly built by Mir Jumla, to check the raids of the Mughs and the Portuguese, who then went up the river Meghna from Chittagong, and plundered in the districts of Dacca (For detail see pp. 110-11). The fort formerly stood on the bank of the river Ichhamati, but now the river has silted up at this spot, and the silts have buried the walls upto the level of the parapet on the southern side. It was not meant to be a siege fort, and hence provides only a weak defensive wall, with rounded bastions at the corners. The space within afforded shelter to the soldiers who encamped here during the rains, which was the season of the raids. One important feature of this fort is a big circular drum on the southern side, which is further defended by a wall of fortification. This big drum must have meant for mounting a huge cannon, which could keep away the raiders advancing through the middle of the river. To-day on the top of this drum has been built a quarter for the sub-divisional officer, and the fort itself is being used for Jail.

The big drum noticeable here is a special feature of the Mughal river fortress in this region.

Mosque of Baba Adam Shahid (*pl.XIX*)

The mosque is known after a locally famous saint Baba Adam, who lies buried in a simple grave nearby. Nothing historical is known about him. Dr. Wise, however, records the following tradition :

"Baba Adam was a very powerful Darwesh, who came to this part of the country with an army during the reign of Ballal Sen. Having encamped his army near Abdullapur, a village about 3 miles to the north-east, he caused pieces of cows' flesh to be thrown within the walls of the Hindu Prince's fortress. Ballal Sen was very irrate and sent messengers throughout the country to find out by whom the cow had been slaughtered. One of the messengers shortly returned and informed him that a foreign army was at hand, and that the leader was then praying within a few miles of the palace. Ballal Sen at once galloped to the spot, found Baba Adam still praying, and at one blow cut off his head."[1]

The story, though affording a charm of romantic tale, is little better than a pure fiction devoid of any historical sense. But the mosque has fortunately an inscription, which records :

".........This Jami Masjid was built by the great Malik, Malik Kafur, in the time of the king, the son of the king, Jalal ud-Duniya wal-Din Fateh Shah, the king, son of Mahmud Shah, the king, in the middle of the month of Rajab 888 A. H. (August, A. D. 1483)."[2] Fateh

1. *J. A. S. B.* Vol. XLII, 1873, p. 285.
2. *Ibid*, p. 284.

Shah was the last Ilyas Shahi ruler of Bengal. The mosque has the usual oblong plan, measuring 43′ long by 36′ broad, with octagonal towers at the four corners. The facade has been renovated, and the old decorations have disappeared, except for bands of moulding. In between the doorways can be seen an arched niche with a hanging chain. The battlements and cornice are curved, above which rise the domes, some of which have been rebuilt in recent time. The interior of the hall is divided into two aisles and three bays by stone pillars. The western side has three decorated mihrabs. The mosque fairly well represents pre-Mughal style of architecture.

Vikrampur

Vikrampur is the oldest, historically recorded, capital city in the neighbourhood of Dacca. It was an important place during the hey-days of the Great Pala rulers of Bengal. According to some historians, the name Vikrampur is derived from the title, Vikramaditya, said to have been assumed by Dharmapaladeva, the second and greatest ruler of the Pala dynasty, who built here a Buddhist monastery. Another Buddhist dynasty of rulers, the Chandras, had their capital at this place. The last Hindu kings, the Senas had also their administrative headquarter at this spot. After they lost Northwest Bengal to the Muslims, they fixed their permanent residence here, and this town saw for nearly a century the see-saw battle between the Hindus and the Muslims.

Today, the ruins of this city lie buried in the silt of the Dhaleswari river. They are about fifteen miles from Dacca, and can be approached from Narayanganj by a steamer going up to Kadamtali. From this ghat one has to walk on foot for more than a mile to reach the first monument of old. It is a mosque of Baba Adam Shahid

at Rampal. About a mile and half still further lie the ruins of Ballal bari, now levelled to the field. Half a mile to the west of Ballal bari there is a small square tank, called *Pushkarini*, and *Agnikund.* About a mile to the south of Ballal bari is the great lake called Rampal Dighi, on the northern bank of which is an old dried up tree, of which fantastic stories are told. Further beyond is the tank of Harishchandra, which was excavated by the archaeological department some years back. In the neighbourhood there are many other villages, where one can see old sculptural relics, generally kept in modern temples.

Cunningham writes : "The ruins of Ballalbari consist of a large earthen fort about 750 feet square, with a broad ditch of about 200 feet all round. The entrance is on the east side by a causeway leading through an oblong outwork 300 feet in breadth, which was most probably the site of the servant's houses. The whole circuit of the enclosure, with its ditches and outwork, is just one mile. No bricks are now to be seen ; but Dr. Taylor states that there are "mounds of bricks and the foundations of walls" both in the vicinity and in the country around, to the distance of many miles."[1]

Muazzampur

After crossing the Lakhya at Demra we follow Narsingdi road and about four miles from the main road on right is the village of Muazzampur.[2] It represents Muazzamabad of the mediaeval period, and was at one time the head-quarter of the district. It seems that Sikandar Shah established here a mint, and in the time of Alauddin

1. Cunningham, *A. S. R.*, Vol. XV, pp. 132—33.
2. For detail of the monuments in the neighbourhood see N. K. Bhattasali in *Dacca Review*, Vol. VII. No. 1, April 1917 pp. 12—16.

Husain Shah (A. D. 1493-1519), his governor, Khawas Khan, had here his headquarter, and ruled from this place the districts on either side of the river Meghna. The name Muazzamabad seems to have originated from Ghiyas-uddin Azam Shah, son of Sikandar Shah.

In this village stands the tomb of Shah Langar, of whom nothing authentic is known. The tradition is that he was a prince of Baghdad, who having renounced the world, wandered through different countries and at last came to this place and died. To the north of the tomb stands a six-domed mosque, (now renovated) measuring 42′ by 30′, which formerly had an inscription, later broken to pieces. This fragmentary record, as read by Sayid Aulad Hasan, gives the name of the builder of the mosque as Firoz Khan, who constructed it probably in the time of Shamsuddin Ahmed Shah, son of Jalaluddin Muhammad.

Mirpur Dargah

About eight miles to the north-west of the city, near the village of Mirpur, approachable by motorable road, stands the famous mausoleum of Shah Ali Baghdadi. To this shrine thousands of people pay visit during the rains. The main tomb is a single-domed square building, measuring 36′ each side externally. Close to it exists a mosque, which was originally built in A. D. 1480 but in 1806 was completely renovated by Shah Muhammad Sahib of Magh-bazar. The outhouses, that are seen within the compound, were built by Nawab Sir Ahsanullah Bahadur.

According to a later inscription, fixed in 1806, in the mosque, Hazrat Shah Ali came from Baghdad along with forty other saints in order to preach Islam. He settled at Mirpur and devoted himself to his self-chosen work.

In 1577 he died, and was buried here. Mysterious stories are told regarding his death.[1]

Sabhar

Going beyond Mirpur *Dargah* we pass by Sabhar farm on the right, and then at the sixteenth mile begin the ancient ruins of Sabhar, correctly speaking Sambhar, which was the capital of the Sambhog country in 7th and 8th centuries A. D. Dr. N. K. Bhattasali who surveyed the entire area in 1921, writes : Sabhar "is a historical place, the traditional capital of Raja Harishchandra. It stands on the east bank of the Bansai which is a branch of the Brahmaputra and falls into the Dhaleswari at a place to the south of Sabhar.

"The Bansai has still on its east bank, to the north of the present bazar, the ruins of Harish Chandra's fort called Harish Chandra's *Kotbari* in the map published by J. Rennell in 1780. The *Kotbari* is 720 feet long and 550 feet broad. The surrounding mud wall is still at some places 25 feet high. The physical aspect of the place as well as of Rajasan and Majidpur localities, indicate that the places were full of civil, military and ecclesiastical edifices, the unmistakable signs of a great age." The passage of time has destroyed much of the ancient relic. Even then we can recognise a few. "The places are full of *dighis* or large tanks almost silted up numbering 50 the *sare bava—ganda* of tradition. Some of them are of great interest, as for instance, the *Niramish* dighi, the fishless tank dug, as the tradition has it, for the use of the Buddhist king's mother. There appears to be a bed

1. For detail see Ghulam Saklayan, *Purba Pakistaner Sufi Sadhak*, Dacca, 1368 B. S. pp. 46-49 *Bangla Academi Patrika*, 5th year 3rd no. 1368 B. S. pp. 65—84.

of a river known as *Baid* separating Rajasan (east) from Majidpur (west). At Majidpur, it is said, was the place of Raja Harish Chandra. Ruins of the palace and a moat all round called *katanga* and the *Sagar* dighi to the east of the palace, which still holds water in its bosom throughout the year, are pointed out to this day as memorials of its lost greatness. Majidpur seems to be a modern name given to it by the Ghazis of Bhowal Pergana who ruled over this part of the country before the Moguls. It is also called by some Majootpur, the place of hoarded wealth.

"Many things of historical interest have been, of late, discovered from a place at Rajasan. Recent discoveries of Buddha images on large bricks (now in the Dacca Musem) in different postures of contemplation from the place conclusively proves that Rajasan is a misnomer. It was really Bajasan, the corrupted form of *Bajrasan*, the most important of the several *asans* of the Buddhist monks. It is said that Buddha himself obtained *Nirvana* while sitting in contemplation in such *asan*. The meaning being unintelligible to the people, they began to call it *Rajasan*, the seat of Raja Harish Chandra. The recent discoveries of so-called Rajasan bear testimony to the fact of the existence of a Buddhist monastery where monks like Srijnan Dipankar Atish had an opportunity for preparing themselves for their future vocation."[1]

Dhamrai

After crossing the river Banshi, we come to the Dak Bungalow where one can stop and have a snack. Then

1. *Dacca Review*, Vol. XI, Nos. 2 & 3, May-June 1921, pp. 39-40 ; see also *Jadu*, April 1929, pp. 24—27.

we leave the main road and follow an unpaved path, but motorable, to Dhamrai (a corrupted form of *Dharmarajika*) associated with the old Buddhist remains now completely forgotten. The first locality on way is *Pathantola* where we can stop and see on our left a *Panch Pir Mazar*—tombs of five local saints of Bengal so very common in this part. One of the graves found is a modern square building. Here is lying buried Hazrat Mir Sayyid Ali Tirmizi, chief of the five *ashab* who came here to spread Islam. There is an inscription of the time of Alauddin Husain Shah,[1] dated 922/1516, fixed on the western side of the grave. The inscription speaks of the construction of a mosque probably in this *dargah*. Hence the saint must have come here before this date. There is another inscription[2] now fixed in a private house, not far from this place, which is in a beautiful hand. The inscription speaks of the construction of a mosque by Akhund Shir, *Mir-i-Bahar* (a naval officer) at this place in 887/1482. It seems that the *dargah* was in existence even before this date, as the medieval practice was to build mosques in the *dargahs*. Now the mosques have fallen, but the inscriptions remain to recall their memory. To the south of the main tomb lie five graves, two of them are on one platform. Here we have the following inscription :

بعہد محمد شہ تاجدار بنا کرد عبد الرسول این مزار
هزار و صد و پنج و سه بود ز هجر نبی سال آن در شمار
سنہ ۱۱۵۳

It speaks of the construction of a *mazar* by Abdul Rasul in 1153/1740.

1. Shamsuddin Ahmed *Inscriptions of Bengal*, p. 195.
2. *Ibid*, p, 118.

Proceeding a little ahead we come to Muqamtola, where we can see the tombs of *Haji* and *Ghazi*, two of the five saints. The tomb is a single-domed square building, on which the date in Presian and Bengali is given as 955/1548. But obviously the present building is a later reconstruction. Another tomb of Sayyid Ataur Rahman Alvi from Bijnor is dated 1294 B. S. In front of the tomb can be seen two unfinished stone pillars of octagonal shape. A little further away can be seen the tombs of Shah Jangi Pir and Mir Makhdum.

From this place we pass to the main Dhamrai market which is in the Hindu locality. The market is even now famous for bronze ware and is a nice place for buying curios. But the muslin weavers, the Basaks, left the place long ago. Right in the heart of the market is a beautiful *ratha* built in wood in the typical Bengali style. It moves on 32 wheels. The greatest attraction of the place for the Hindus is the temple of *Yas-Madhava*, which is a modern building, and the images are also new. But the tradition about this temple goes back far in history. It the year 1092/1681 during the reign of Aurangzeb 31 *bighas* of land were granted to the temple by a firman under the signature of Khanazat Muhammad Mazhar. Here can also be seen a wooden image of Vishnu with ten incarnations painted on the back stella. There are many other temples and images in the locality.[1]

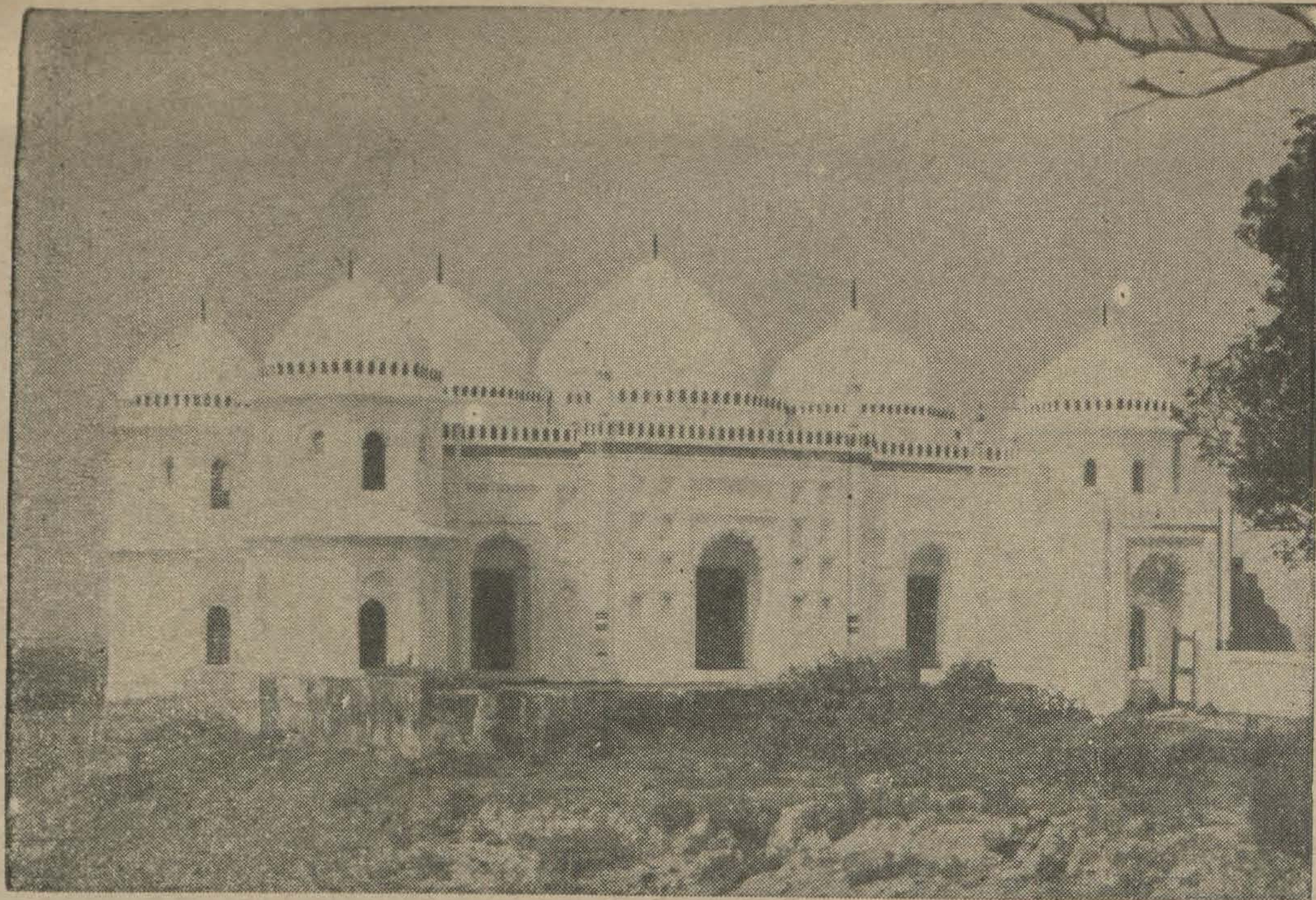
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ز باران بـود قطـره در ابتدا

و لیکن شود سیل در انتها

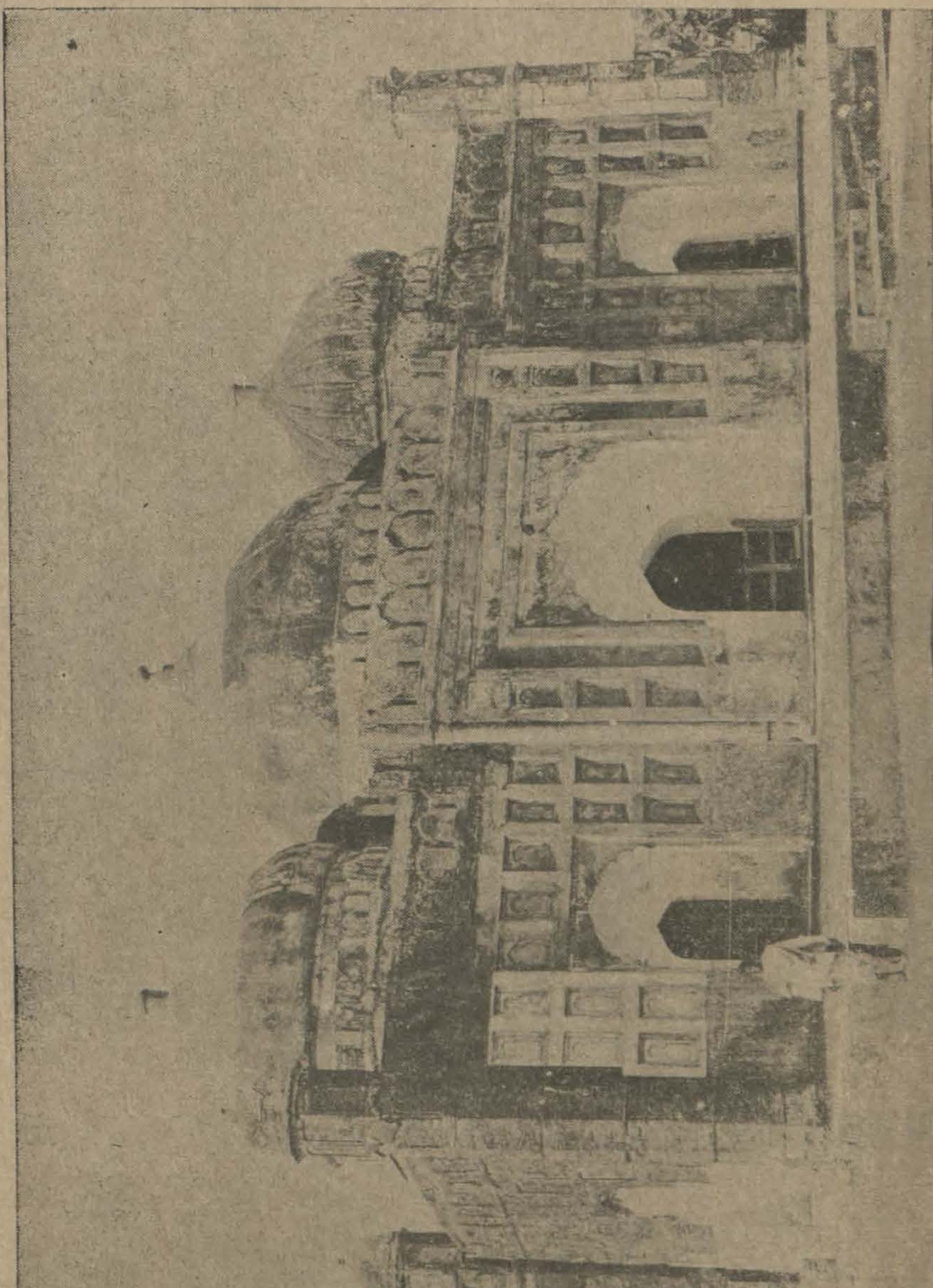
1. For details see Roy's *Dhakar Itihasa*, Vol. I, pp. 385—95.

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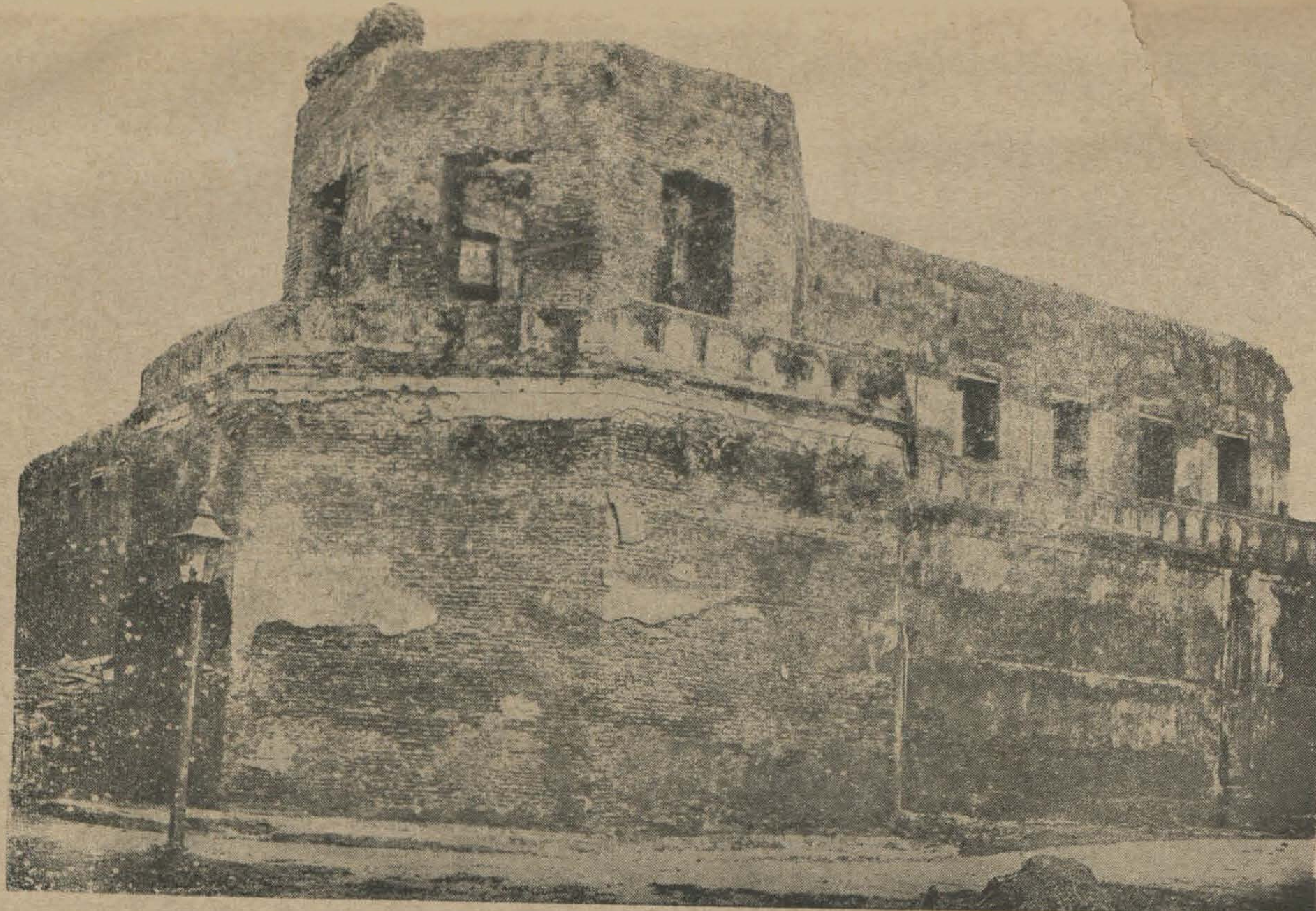
Dacca. Satgumbad Mosque (Cir. 1680)

Plate II



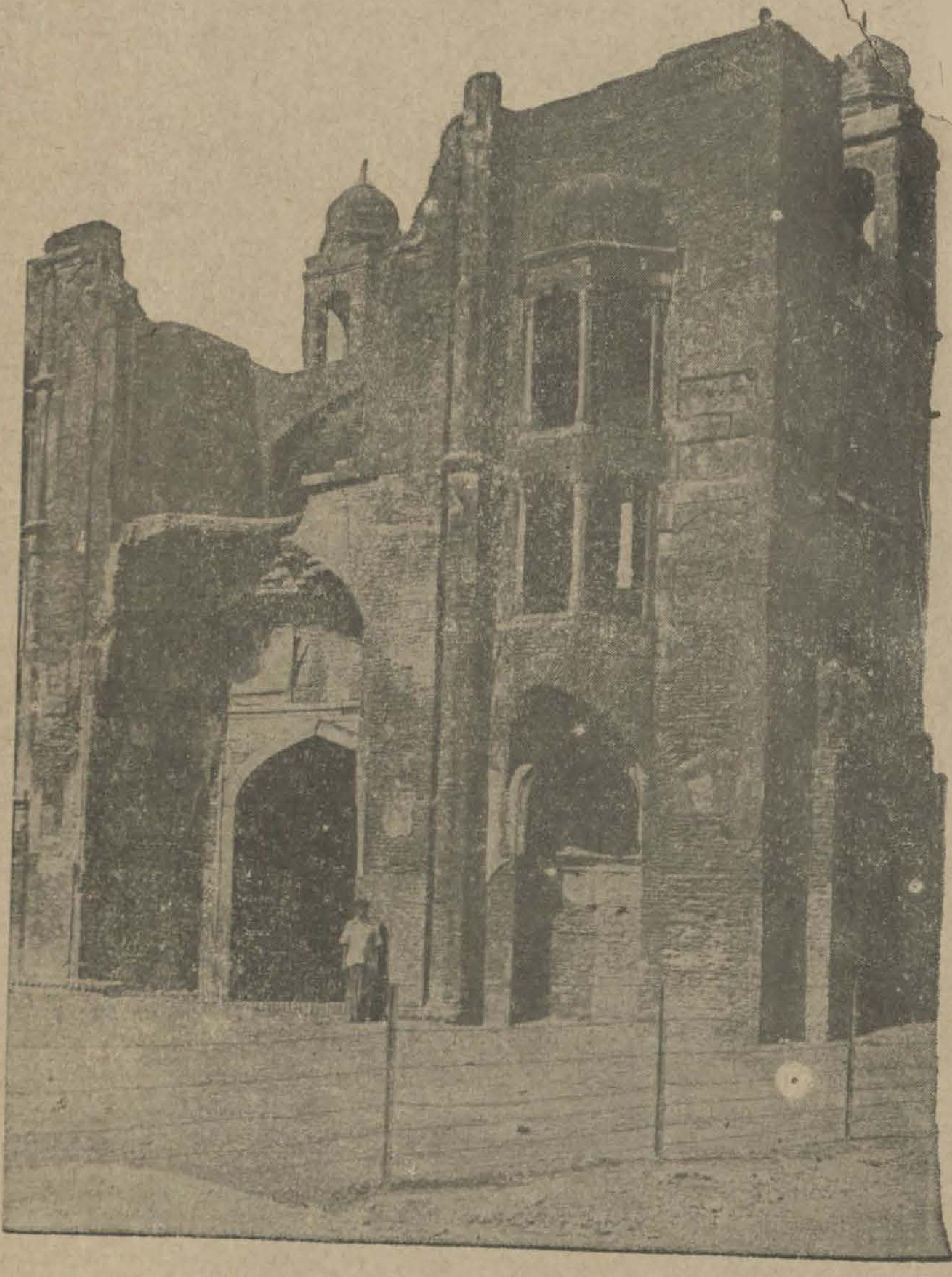
Dacca. Lalbagh Mosque (1679)

Plate III



Dacca. Lalbagh fort, South-west bastion (1678)

Plate IV

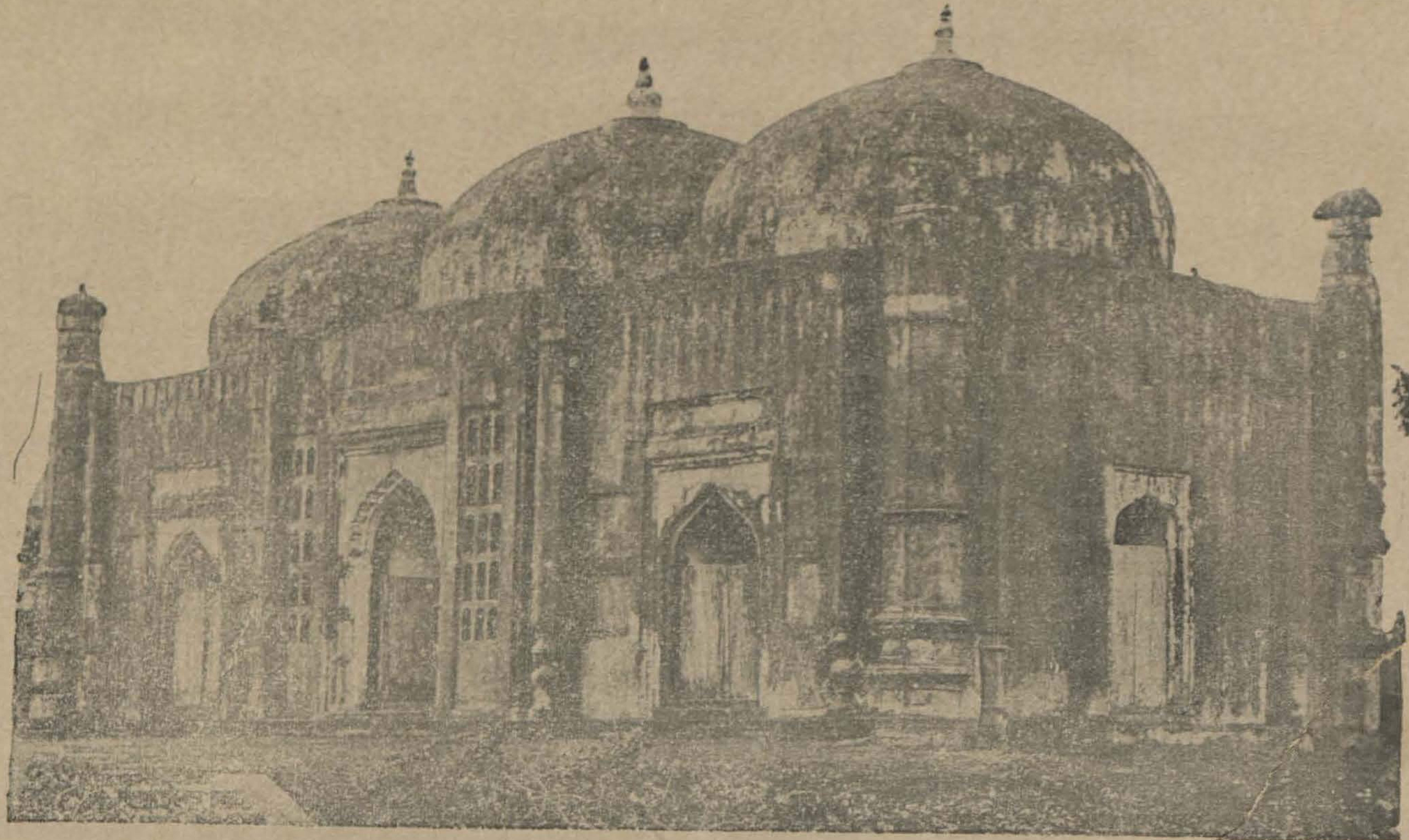


Dacca Lalbagh fort. Southern Gate (1678-79)



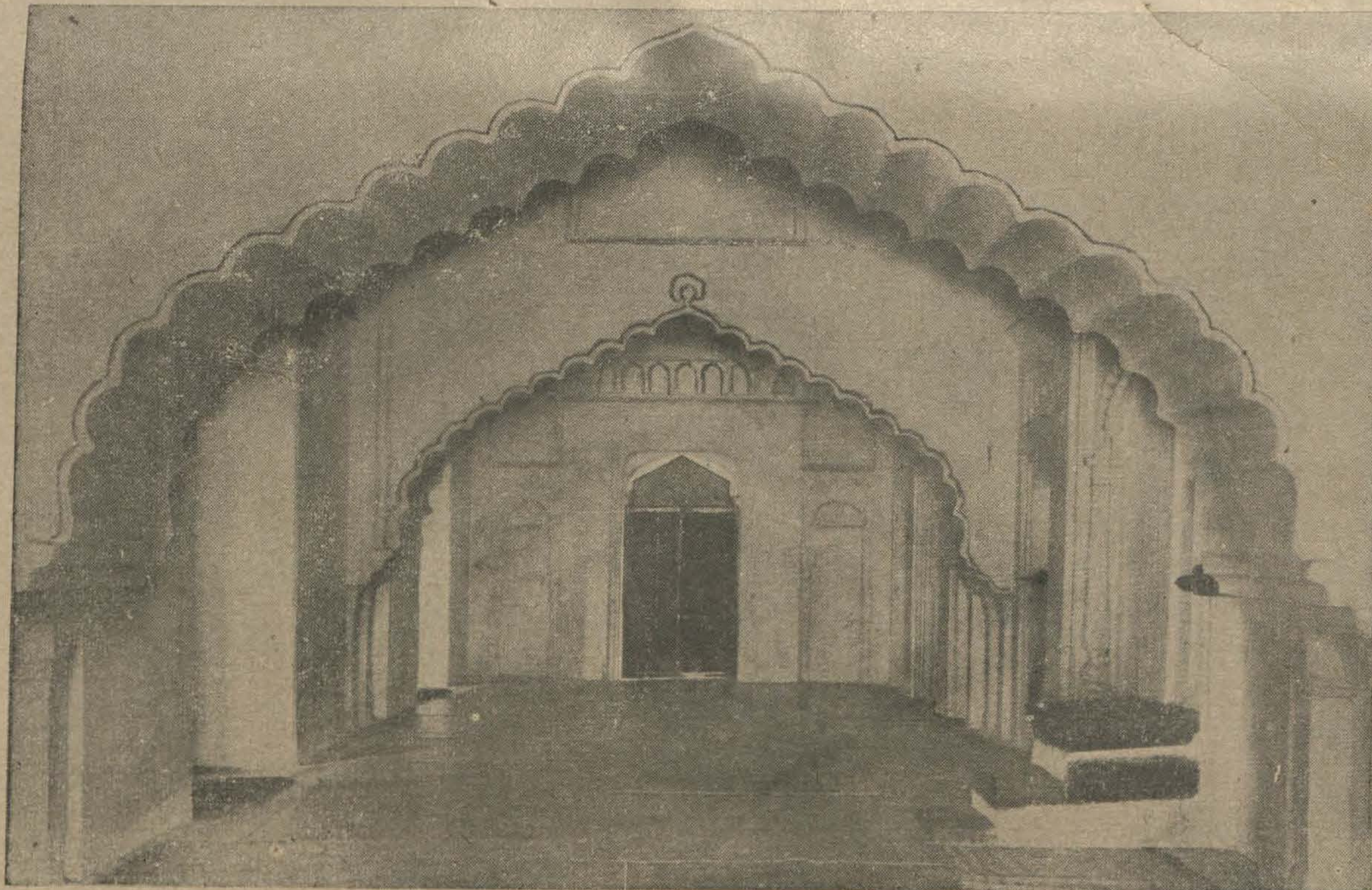
Dacca. Tomb of Haji Khwaja Shahbaz (1679)

Plate VI



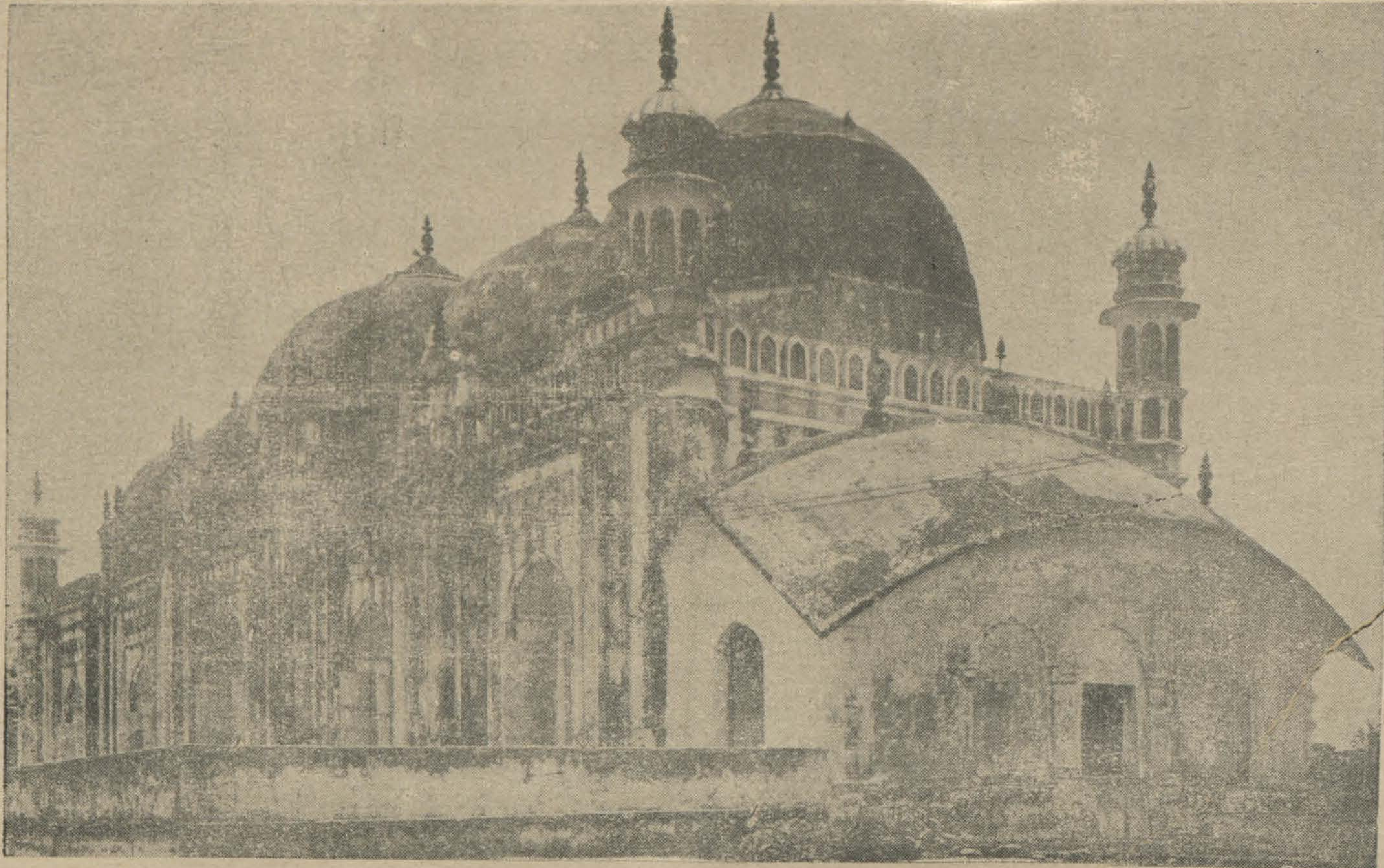
Dacca. Mosque of Haji Khwaja Shahbaz (1679)

Plate VII



Dacca. Mosque of Haji Khwaja Shahbaz, the interior arcades

Plate VIII



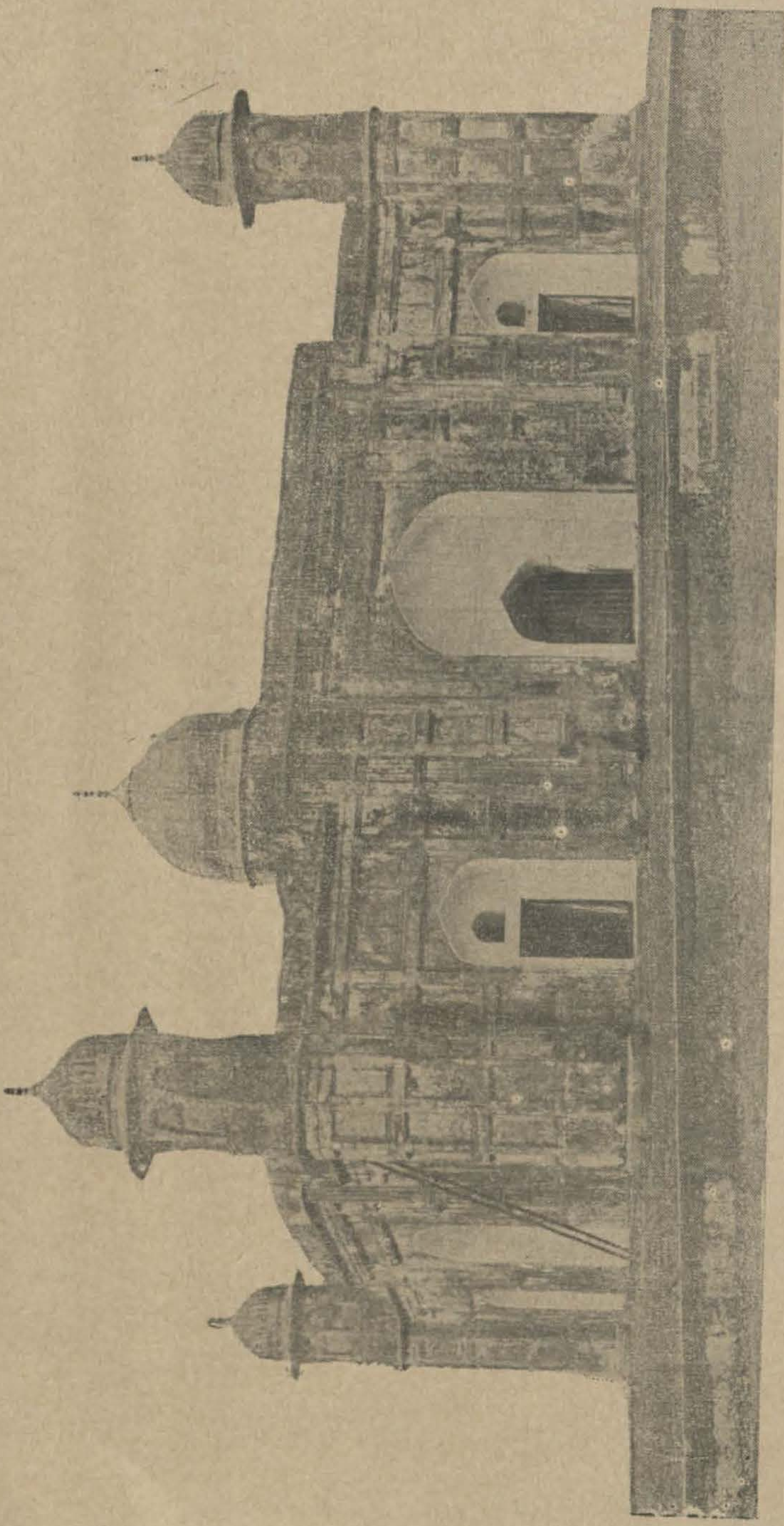
Dacca. Kartalab Khan's Mosque (Cir. 1700)

Plate IX



Dacca. Khan Muhammad Mirdha's Mosque (1706)

Plate X



Dacca. Mausoleum of Bibi Pari (Cir. 1684)

Plate XI



Dacca. Dara Begam's tomb (mid-17th century)

Plate XII



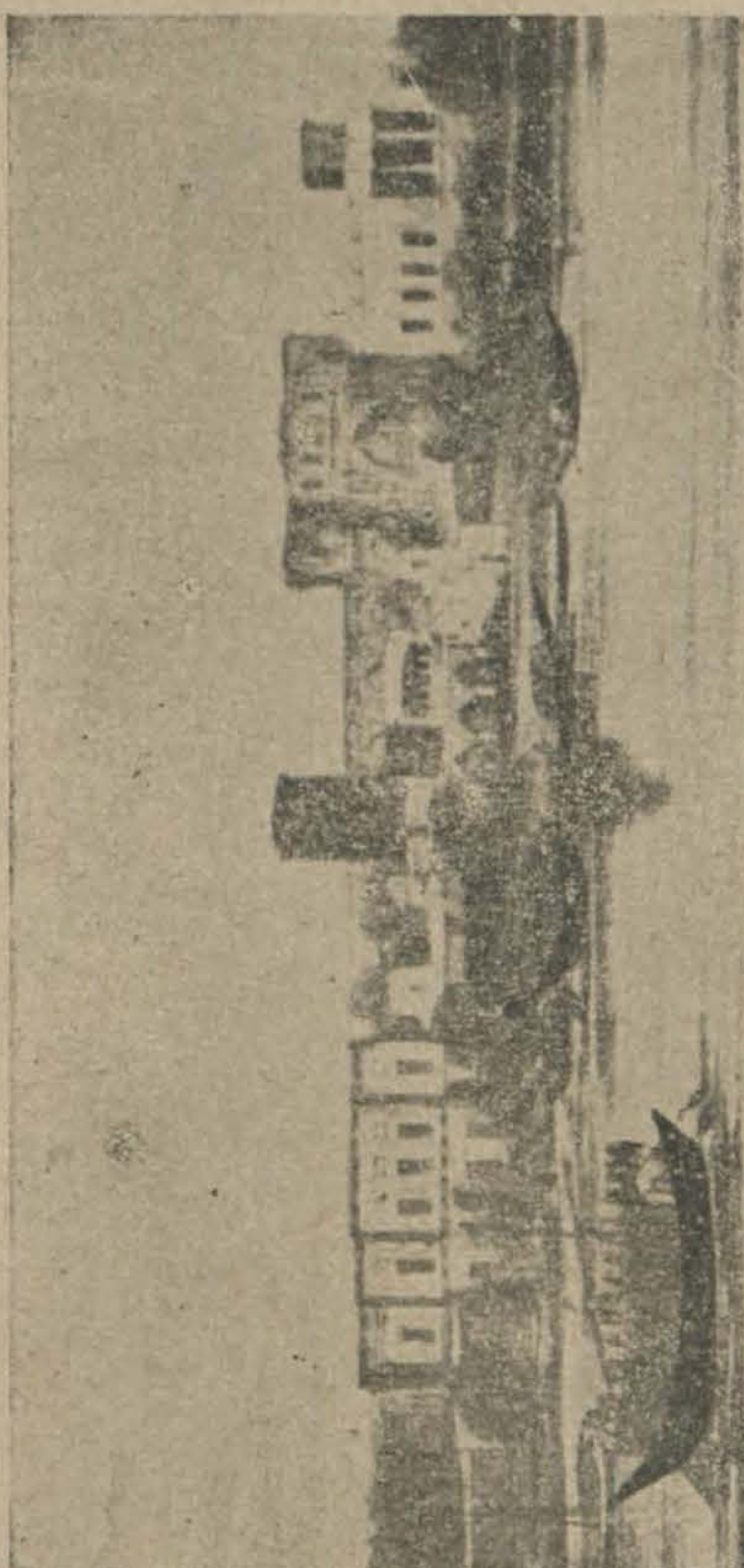
Dacca. Allakuri's Mosque (cir. 1680)

Plate XIII



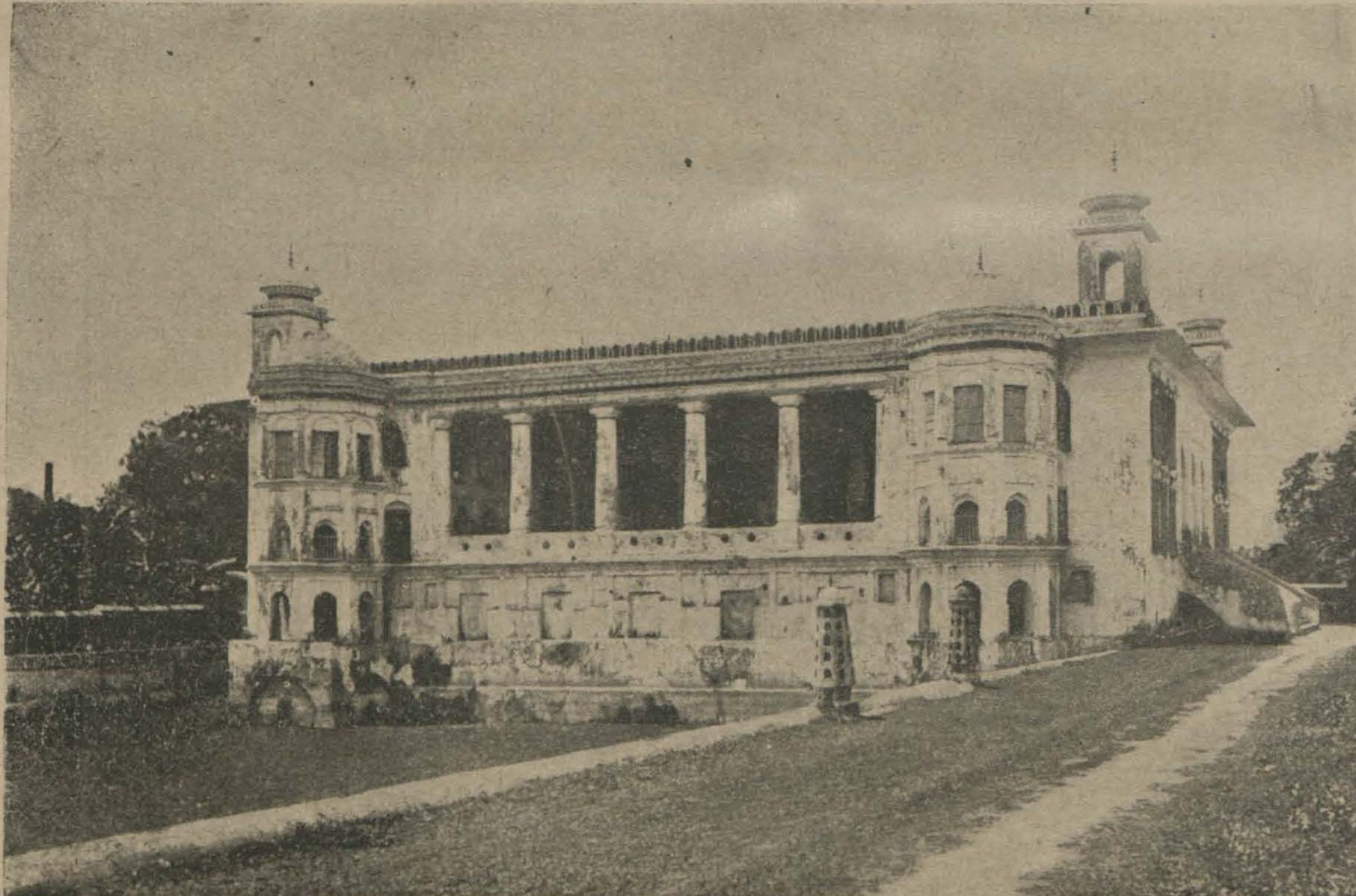
Dacca. Tomb near Satgumbad (unknown) (17th century)

Plate XIV



Dacca. Bara Katra (1644)

Plate XV



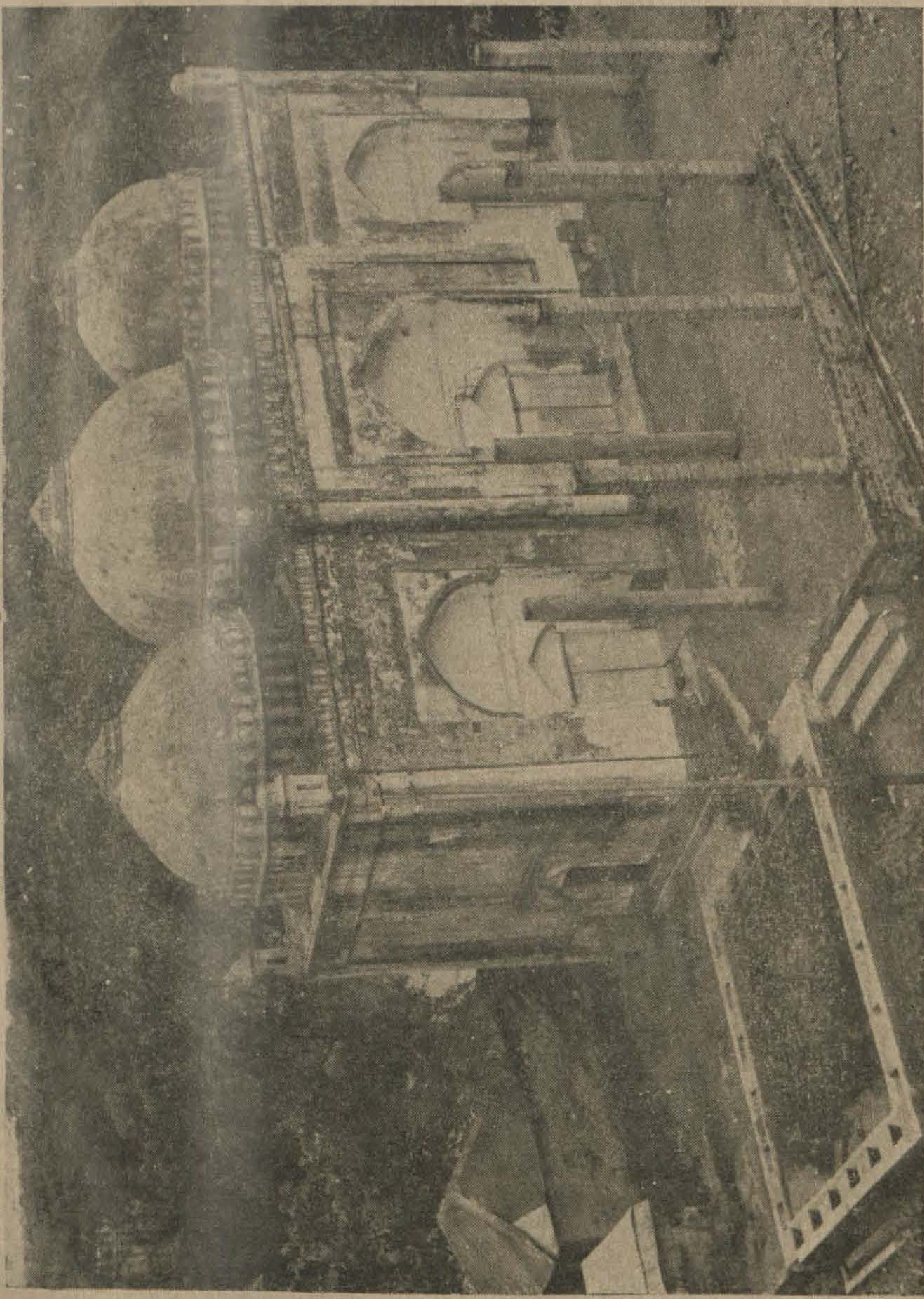
Dacca. Husaini Dalan (renovated) (cir. 18th Century)

Plate XVI



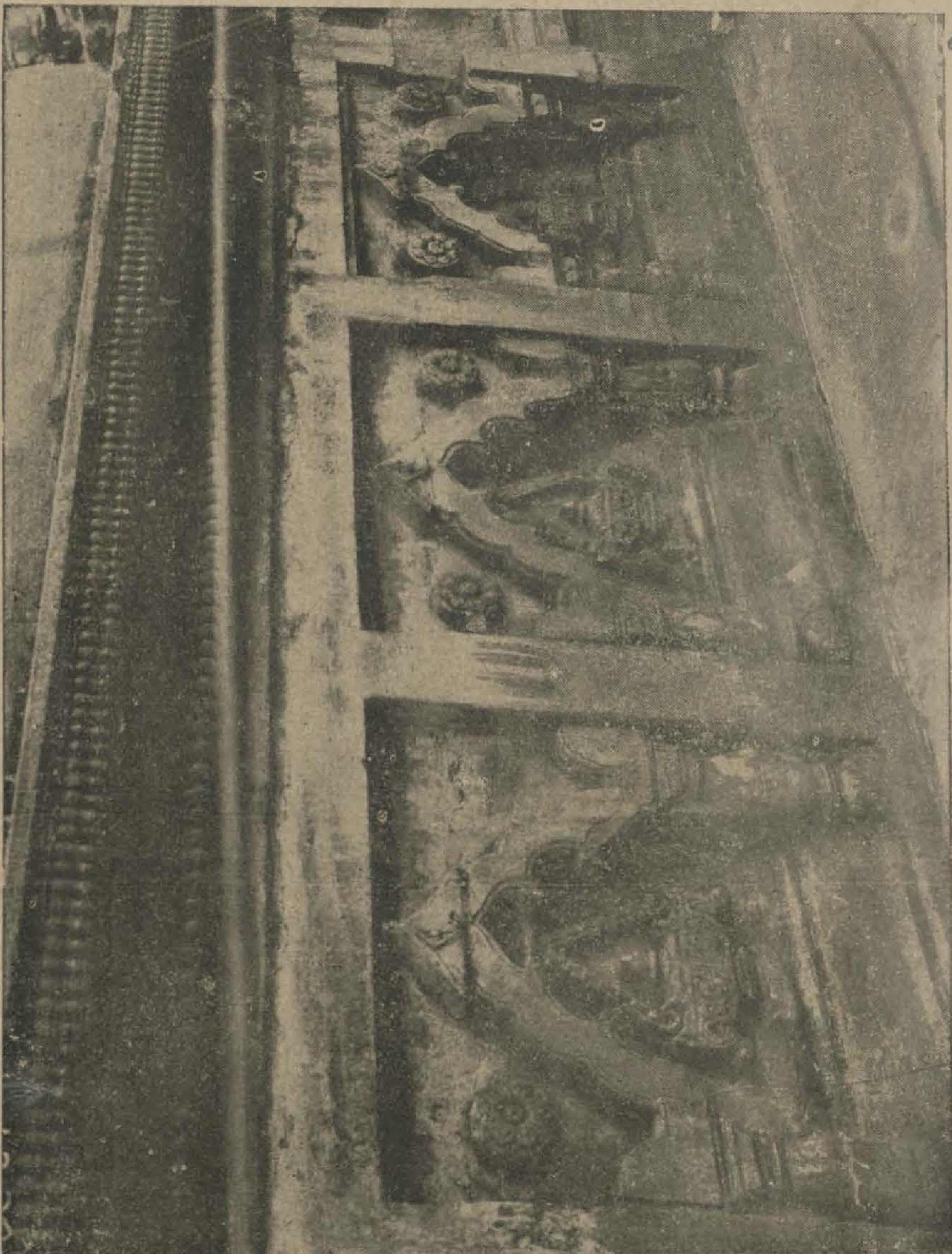
Dacca. Pagla Pul (cir. 1660)

Plate XVII



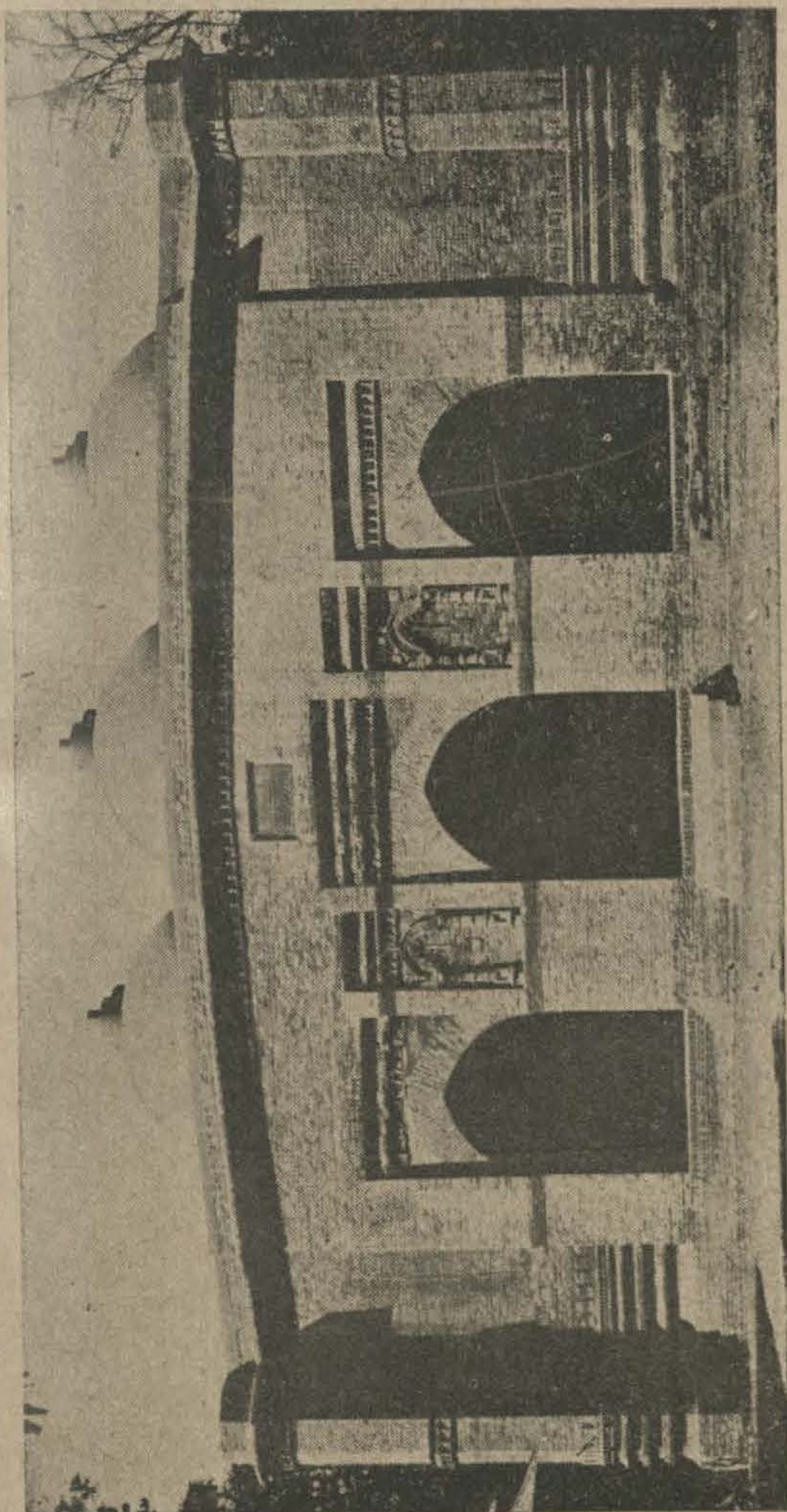
Narayanganj, Bibi Biban's Mosque (17th Century)

Plate XVIII



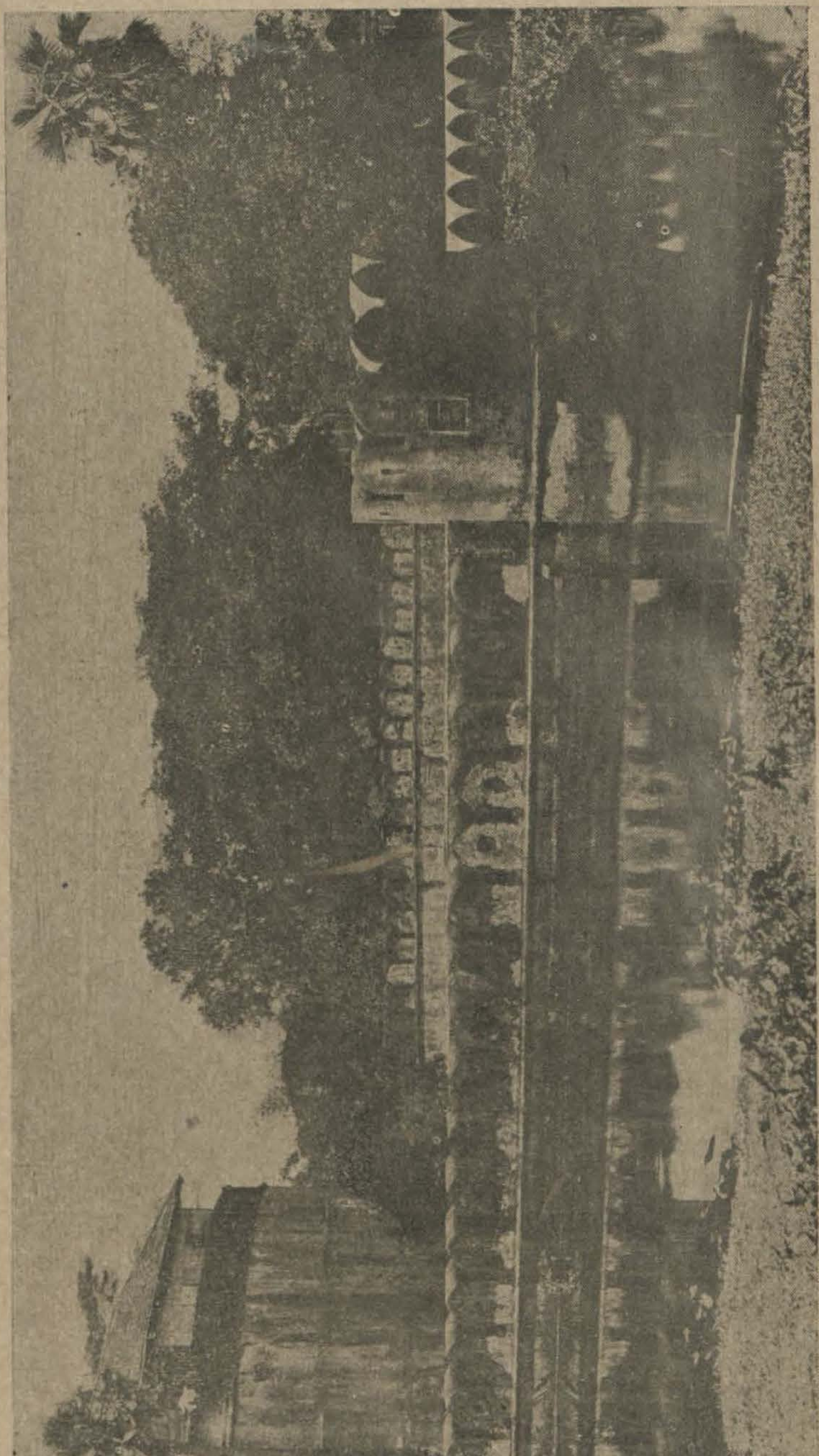
Sonargaon. Tomb of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah, Panel decoration (Cir. 1410)

Plate XIX



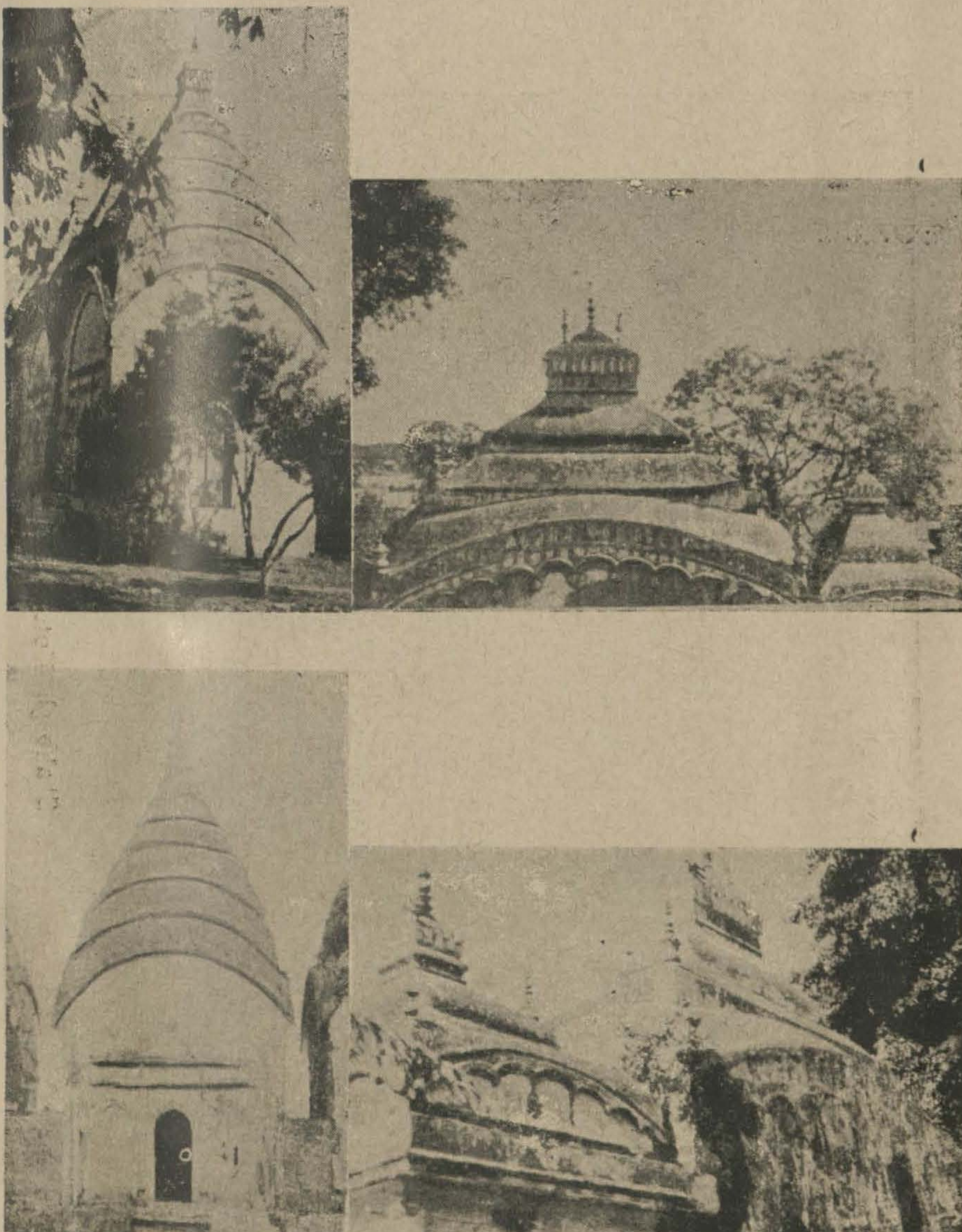
Rampal. Baba Adam's Mosque (1483)

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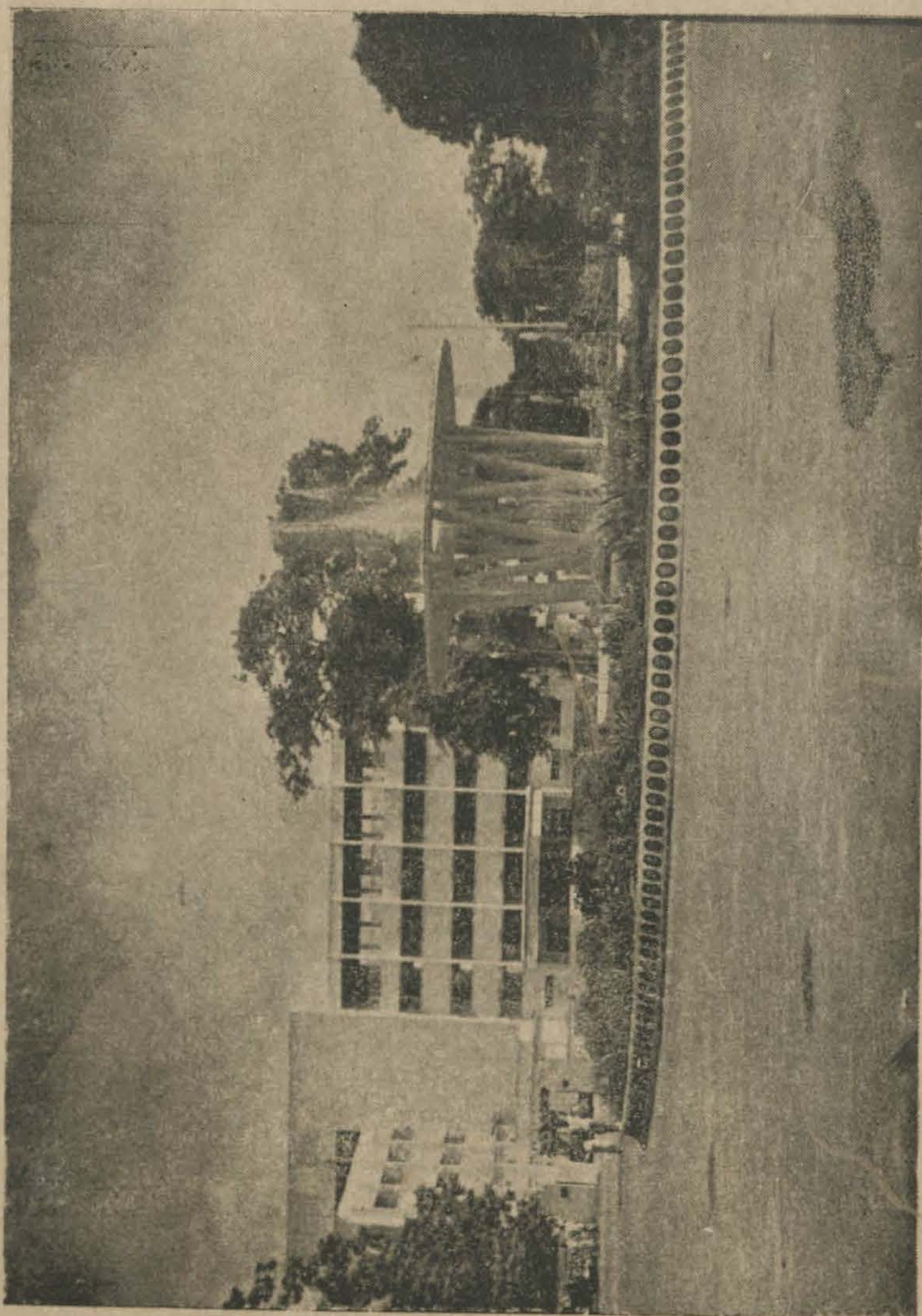
Munshiganj. Idrakpur fort (Cir. 1660)

Plate XXI



Dacca. Dhakeswari Temple (17th century)

Plate XXII



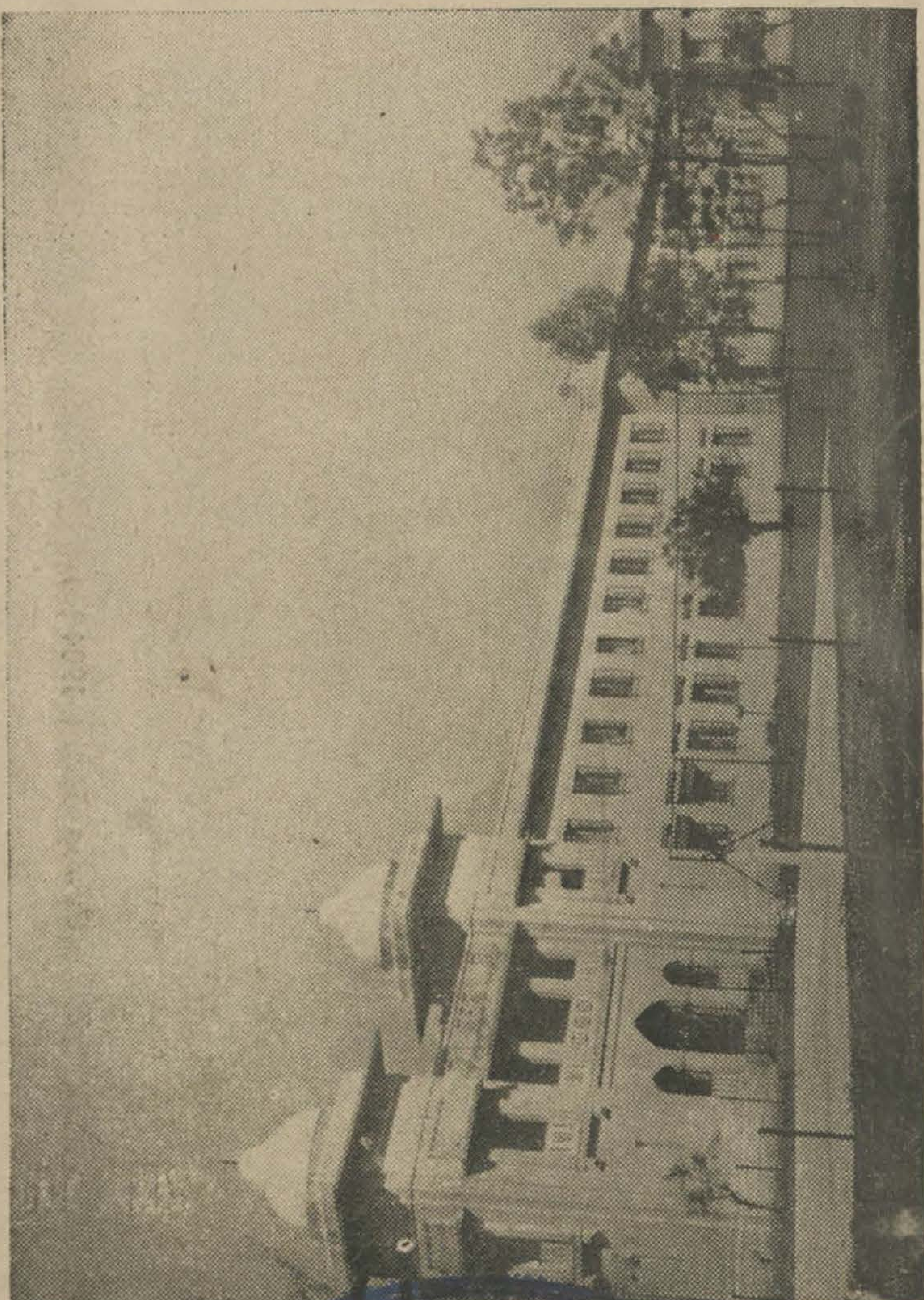
Shahbagh Hotel (1954)

Plate XXIII



Curzon Hall (1904)

Plate XXIV



Salimullah Muslim Hall (1929)